The Church of Grasmere

Armitt

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THE LATE MARY L. ARMITT.

Frontispiece.

THE

CHURCH OF GRASMERE:

A HISTORY

BY M. L. ARMITT

(Author of *Ambleside Town and Chapel*)

With Illustrations by Margaret L. Sumner

Frontispiece from a portrait by Fred Yates

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EDITOR'S PREFACE

THE History of Grasmere contained in this little volume was nearly ready for the press when the author, who was working on it to the very last, was taken away. For several years she had been collecting material, leaving no stone unturned to get at facts and records from the earliest times, and at last she was arranging for its publication. Her modest estimate of the value of her work made her often anxious, but her keen love of investigating the antiquities of her neighbourhood and country kept her always eager. To a kindred spirit nothing could be more interesting than to visit with her some old hall or farm or even a site which her historic knowledge could furnish with its original buildings, and people with its old-world inhabitants. What she most desired was to see for herself what she wished to write about, or, if that were impossible, something similar which still existed, and she had a genius for reconstructing, which made her deductions and suggestions singularly valuable.

She was at no time strong, and for this reason her work was perpetually liable to interruption, still her indomitable courage and her endless patience enabled her to do wonders, and, though never able to work for long together, bit by bit she got through a great deal. How hard she worked and how carefully, no one who reads her book, and sees the number of facts she has got together, and notes the numerous references to books which she had examined, can fail to perceive. Over and over again she had to give in for a time, but her bright intelligence quickly reasserted itself, and she

was ready on most days to discuss the subjects which for the time absorbed her. And this she did with a delighted eagerness, and always with that humour which is the salt of all conversation and companionship. On birds and their habits she spoke with authority, and could always contribute much valuable information obtained by personal observation. Generally the first to hear and see the newly arrived summer migrants, and able to distinguish the note of each, she thought no trouble too great if it led to the chance of seeing some rare kind nesting in the neighbourhood. Equally keenly would she follow up the threads of some local history, for she had the true scientific spirit and a genuine passion for archæology, so that by constant study she had accumulated a surprising mass of information relating to old historic Westmorland, and to Ambleside, Rydal and Grasmere in particular. Of Ambleside she has already published a little pamphlet, called *Ambleside Town and Chapel*. The present volume is her completed work on Grasmere; and the History of Rydal, and more especially of Rydal Hall, a more considerable work on which she had been engaged for many years, has advanced so far that we hope soon to see it published. Indeed some chapters of it have already appeared in the columns of the *Westmorland Gazette*.

We had long ago arranged that I should help in seeing her work through the press; and with her usual thoroughness and care, she had got the present volume so far ready that my task has been but a superficial one, accompanied throughout by the "one pure image of regret" that she did not live to see, herself, the fruits of her long labour.

W. F. RAWNSLEY.

THE CHURCH OF GRASMERE.

ERRATA.

Page 6, *for* Galway *read* Galloway.

,, 19, *note* † this pavement is not really old.

,, 130, *for* Lough *read* Luff.

,, 141, *Copia Pax Sapientia.* No Latin words are on this bell.

,, 182, *note* † *for* Fox *read* Cox.

,, 191, *for* Tremenhere *read* Tremenheere, *and for* Philipps *read* Phillipps.

,, 199, *for* Swathmoor *read* Swarthmoor.

,, 208, *for* customery *read* customary, *and in note, for* Brown *read* Browne.

ST. OSWALD'S CHURCH, GRASMERE.

Photo, by Green, by kind permission of C. R. Markham, Keswick.

PART I

PREFACE

INTRODUCTORY

THE DEDICATION OF THE CHURCH

THE SITE

Inscription on the Alms Box

PREFACE

GRASMERE draws many pilgrims in these latter days. It has become the Shrine of Nature and Poetry, for within its graveyard lies buried nature's austerest and most sincere interpreter. The natural beauty of the spot, combined with its associations, has given rise to a copious literature; and its praises have been rehearsed in poetry and prose of a high order. But by the historian Grasmere has been neglected. Its geographical position has tended to its eclipse. In ancient times locked up from the world in the farthest chamber of the mountains, and still the remotest parish of Westmorland (itself a neglected county), it has missed the attention of the careful chronicler, and no serious attempt has been made to penetrate its past. James Torre (1649-1699) indeed in his MS. collections for a history of the Archdeaconry of Richmondshire, compiled a list of five rectors who had served the parish of Grasmere before the Reformation; but no searcher has followed up his efforts. Nor has the excellent, though necessarily limited, information given in the pages of Nicolson and Burn (1770) been since filled up or supplemented.

The following historical sketch makes no pretensions to completeness, which would be beyond both the writer's powers and opportunities. It began as a small thing, a chapter merely in the yet unfinished "Chronicles of Rydal." But there seemed a need for the publication of such facts as had been gathered together; and in response to an expressed desire, the sketch that had been laid by was overhauled, expanded and prepared for press. It contains (there is little doubt) some unsuspected errors and oversights, for which the reader's leniency is asked.

The information has been collected from many sources, public, private, and traditional. The earliest comes from the Record Office, where there are treasures still to be explored. For the seventeenth century—and particularly the period of the Civil Wars—the MSS. at Rydal Hall have yielded facts of great interest, especially those culled from the account-sheets of Mr. Richard Harrison, who was agent and executor of Squire John Fleming.

From all sources, however, the information obtained is fragmentary, and facts are disappointingly isolated. Always there is something beyond, that we want to know and cannot find out; and so the story of the great Restoration Tithe Dispute has no ending. The Presentments have been only available for a limited number of years. The church registers are defective. Even the churchwardens' accounts, which begin at the Restoration, are not complete. It is fortunate, however, that the second volume of these accounts, long missing, and strangely recovered from papers found at the house of descendants of a former parish clerk, was copied before it was again lost. There is a gap of seven years between the third volume and this copy, owing no doubt to the last leaves of the second volume having been torn off.*

* Vol. I. ends in 1735. Vol. II. overlaps four years and begins in 1732, but the pages from 1734 to 1739 and from 1743 to 1750 are missing, and no entries are made for 1778 and 1779. The vol. ends in 1883.—Ed.

The writer has received more help and kindness than can well be acknowledged. Thanks are specially due to Mr. Stanley le Fleming and Sir Gerald Strickland for granting ready access to their muniments; to Dr. Magrath, author of *The Flemings in Oxford;* to the Revs. W. Jennings, J. H. Heywood, and M. F. Peterson for permitting the church documents to be consulted; to Messrs. W. Farrer, J. A. Martindale, and George Browne for their kind contributions of antiquarian knowledge; to Mr. W. Buckton I am indebted for the plan of the church.

INTRODUCTORY

How the Church was founded in Northumbria

ALL history begins with geography. Grasmere was from early times the centre of a parish that embraced the twin valleys of Rothay and Brathay, whose waters drain into the lake of Windermere, while the lake empties itself into the great bay of Morecambe. Therefore Grasmere has always belonged politically to the fertile region round about the bay, and the history of that region—from the time when the Celt enjoyed it, onward through its conquest by the Angle, its aggregation with the province of Deira and the kingdom of Northumbria, still onward through its conversion to Christianity and its connection with the central church government at York as part of the Archdeaconry of Richmondshire—is the history of Grasmere herself: and to understand the origin of her church, it is necessary to briefly indicate the main events in the kingdom of Northumbria and the Church of York.

The actual rise of Christianity within the valleys can only be conjectured. The Celts who dwelt here through the rule of the Roman may not have embraced the faith, but some whisper of Saint Ninian's mission must surely have come to them, if not his direct teaching, as he passed on his way from Rome through Cumberland, to found at Whithorn in Galway a new religious community, like the one his great teacher Saint Martin had founded at Tours. The mission of Saint Patrick too, who in the fifth century returned to finish the work of conversion and church

establishment in Ireland, must have been noised abroad, for his name is imprinted on many a spot hereabouts; Patterdale or Patricdale,* with its well named after him, being distant barely ten miles from Grasmere.

The holy Kentigern is known to have made missionary excursions from Carlisle into the mountains, before 573; and Crosthwaite, where he planted a cross, is but 13 miles from Grasmere, along the line of the Roman road from Kendal to Old Carlisle. With this artery of communication open, it is impossible that tidings of the new faith should not have reached our valley before the close of the sixth century.

Soon these tidings were to come from the east as well as the west, borne by the triumphant arms of the invading Angles. Truly Ethelfrith who, in winning the battle of Chester, first laid our mountain fastnesses open to his kingdom of Northumbria, was a heathen; but his successor Edwin embraced Christianity and brought Paulinus, a member of Saint Augustine's mission, to preach the gospel (627). At York, the capital of the kingdom, a Christian church was built, a second one even being started in stone to replace the wooden structure; and the new bishop moved about with the king and his court, preaching and baptizing. The valleys of Northumberland and Yorkshire, which were the scenes of his labours, are named by Bede, who knew them well; but it is not known that he crossed into Westmorland.

Edwin's overthrow gave Northumbria to the pagan king of Mercia, but it was soon regained by Oswald, who identified himself completely with the new faith. He brought Aidan, who had been educated in the Celtic Church (now firmly settled in Scotland) to fill the place of the departed Paulinus. But instead of taking up the bishop's seat at York, Aidan with the strong predilection shown by his

* Inquisition post mortem of William de Lancaster, 1246.

church for island-sanctuaries, chose Lindisfarne to be the centre of his missionary efforts in Northumbria. Here Finan succeeded him in 651, and rebuilt the first rude edifice, constructing it of hewn oak thatched with reeds.

King Oswald (slain at Maserfeld, 642) was shortly after succeeded by Oswy, an ardent disciple of the new faith, as was Alchfrith his son. Alchfrith acted as sub-king in Northumbria under his father.* He endowed a monastery at Ripon, which was presumably within his dominion, and placed there Eata, abbot of Melrose, with a little band of Scotic monks. At this time there was a young priest named Wilfrith, lately returned from a journey to Rome (658), with whom Alchfrith made fast friends. Convinced by Wilfrith that the practices of the Anglo-Scotic church, where they differed from those of Western Europe, were mistaken, he turned out the monks of Ripon, when they refused to alter their customs, and gave the establishment over to Wilfrith, to rule as abbot. The kings attempted to settle the differences of practice between the churches at the synod of Whitby (664), where the counsels of the Roman party under Wilfrith prevailed; and this caused the retirement of Colman, bishop of Northumbria, who refused to conform. It was now necessary to supply his place, and the kings, father and son, seem without disagreement to have selected each his own man, presumably for his own province; thus making two bishops instead of one.† While Alchfrith chose Wilfrith for his bishop, and sent him to Gaul for consecration, Oswy chose Chad, sending him to Kent to be consecrated as Bishop of York "for him and his" by the Archbishop. But by the time that Wilfrith had

* Bishop Browne in *Theodore and Wilfrith*, pp. 20 and 36, inclines to the opinion that this sub-kingdom embraced the western rather than the southern portion of Northumbria, as generally supposed, in which case it would include those portions of Lancashire and the western coasts northwards, laid open by Ethelfrith's conquest at Chester.

† See *Theodore and Wilfrith*. The same.

returned from his foreign journey, things were changed at the court. Alchfrith was dead, possibly slain in rebellion against his father; and Wilfrith, deprived of his patron, settled down quietly at Ripon as abbot, while Chad ruled the whole church of Northumbria from York.

But when Oswy died (670 or 671) and his son Ecgfrith succeeded, Chad retired, and Wilfrith was made sole Bishop. Now began a very active and happy period of his life. Enjoying undivided power, a position which suited his nature, he moved about his huge diocese, everywhere creating new foundations and building fresh churches. With skilled workmen under him, he was the great architect and builder of his time. First he turned his attention to the head church in York, which had become, since Oswald's days, ruinous. After building there an edifice unique in its time, he took his masons to Ripon, and there he built a basilica of dressed stone with pillars and arches and porches. He also enriched its altar with vases, and a vestment of purple and gold, and laid upon it a book of the Gospels, marvellously illumined, and enclosed in a gold and jewelled case. Wilfrith made the dedication of this church, which was attended by King Ecgfrith, and by tributary kings, reeves and abbots, an occasion of great splendour. Standing before the altar, with his face towards the concourse of people, he recited the names of the lands with which Ripon was endowed, as also of certain sanctuaries of the Britons which were taken over by it.

Now this enumeration of lands, said to be given by princes with the consent of the bishops, is of great interest.* Were these lands within Alchfrith's former sub-kingdom—the nucleus being his monastic endowment?—and was it intended to create a bishopric there at Ripon, separate

* For the meaning and scope of these early gifts to the church, which not only embraced whole villages, but even hundreds and provinces, see Maitland's *Doomsday Book and Beyond*, p. 498.

from the one at York? Certainly the great tracts of country mentioned were to be ecclesiastically ruled from Ripon, whether by abbot or bishop.

Moreover, in the confused and certainly corrupt list of names that has come down to us of Wilfrith's remarkable recitation, several have been localized within that last conquered portion of Northumbria lying to the west, which may have been called by the Celts who lost it, Teyrnllwg.*

Whatever had been Alchfrith's intentions about Ripon, Wilfrith's were clear in thus making it the church centre for a district as wide as a diocese. In effect, it was a diocese; though only for a short time was there a recognized Bishop of Ripon. And this was after Ecgfrith and Wilfrith had unhappily quarrelled, and Wilfrith had been expelled from Northumbria, when Theodore, the new archbishop, who had been called north to re-organize the huge diocese, made finally five bishoprics out of it; and Eadhed (after temporarily ruling a see at Lindsey) became, according to Bede, the Bishop of Ripon. But upon the reconciliation of Wilfrith with King Aldfrith, who succeeded Ecgfrith, Eadhed retired from Ripon, and Wilfrith again took possession of it, and ruled it—though only as abbot—until his death.

Wilfrith's inauguration of Ripon, which took place in

* See Rhys' *Celtic Britain* for a suggestion that Edwin's conquest and Teyrnllwg may represent a considerable portion of our district, also "Rydal" in *Westmorland Gazette*, May 2nd, 1903. Mr. Farrer, while noticing this point in *Victorian History of Lancashire*, vol. ii., considers that better authority could be desired. For the list of names of gifts to Ripon that have come down to us, see Canon Raine's *Historians of the Church of York*. Amounderness, between the Ribble and the Cocker, is one. Cartmel is probably another. The region "dunutinga" may possibly be referred to the Duddon and beyond, where still are manor and fells called Dunnerdale, and the hamlet of Old Dunning Well and Dumerholme. Donya is the name of some explored earthworks at the junction of Bannisdale beck with the Mint, north of Kendal. "Goedyne" suggests "Gadeni" or "Cadeni," a name applied to the people of the Borders. See Prof. Veitch's *History and Poetry of Scottish Borders*. The lands of William de Dunnington are mentioned in the *Furness Abbey Coucher Book*, ccviii.

the period of his sole prelacy of Northumbria (671 to 678) was then an event of great importance for the district round the great Bay, and for Grasmere; indeed it is hardly too much to say that its results lasted over a thousand years. For in spite of the bishop's loss of power, his scheme ultimately held good. When the long dark days of Danish anarchy were passed, the western district which he gathered in to the fold of Ripon emerged as an ecclesiastical entity, and it kept its bounds through the administrative changes of the Norman kings, which carved out of it the barony of Kendal, and made of it parts of Westmorland, Cumberland, Yorkshire and Lancashire. The archdeaconry of Richmondshire, which was formally constituted a section of the diocese of York in 1090, is in fact almost identical with Wilfrid's province of Ripon. It is true that Ripon ceased to be its centre, that establishment sinking again into a monastery, which lay indeed a few miles beyond the boundary of Richmondshire; while a new centre was created at Richmond, a little town without significance standing in another Yorkshire vale.* This great church province was ruled over by an archdeacon, who possessed almost the powers of a bishop,† until it was transferred by Henry the Eighth in 1541 from the diocese of York to that of Chester; and it remained intact until 1847, when it was broken up among what are now the dioceses of Carlisle, Manchester, and Ripon.‡ Our own part of it became the archdeaconry of Westmorland, under Carlisle.

After Wilfrith had lost favour at the Northumbrian court, and carried his grievances to Rome, King Ecgfrith

* In 1140 Alan, earl of Richmond is stated to have oppressed Ripon; and in 1143 he assaulted Archbishop William by the shrine of St. Wilfrith within the church. *Mem. of Ripon.* Surtees Society.

† Wills and inventories of the Archdeaconry of Richmondshire.

‡ This did not take effect, however, until after the death of Bishop Percy in 1856. *Victoria History of Cumberland.*

secured the co-operation of Theodore, archbishop of Canterbury (669) in the organization of the Northern Church. As has been said, there are indications that church work went on busily in the district of the great Bay. St. Cuthbert, who had served his apprenticeship as a monk at Ripon, was made bishop in 685 and administered his great See from Lindisfarne. Into his charge Ecgfrith expressly gave Cartmel with its Britons, and the newly-conquered district round Carlisle. Carlisle became indeed a thriving church centre, with royal nunnery and monastery, and with missions spreading round it. Bede has drawn a striking picture of the bishop's visit to the ruined Roman city, when a vision of the king's overthrow came upon him ; as well as of his last meeting with St. Herebert, the hermit of Derwentwater, who was wont every year to seek his counsel. The district of Cartmel he placed in the charge of the " good Abbot Cineferth," as if it were too distant from Lindisfarne for his immediate care. But, while his own easiest route to Carlisle would be by the straight road along the Roman Wall, he would not be ignorant of that other road striking northwards through the mountains from the great Bay. He may, indeed, have travelled this road himself on his missionary journeys, and even have halted to preach in the vale of Grasmere. It is certain at least that some of the holy men working for the Anglo-Scottish Church at this period must have done so. With the defeat and death of Ecgfrith the glory of the Northumbrian kingdom came to an end indeed ; but the church continued to prosper ; and in the two hundred years between that event and the final relinquishment of Lindisfarne as a See, on through the ravages of the Danes, it wrought a mighty work, not only in the old kingdoms of Bernicia and Deira, but in the region westward. Many of our existing foundations may well date back from that time ; and it is probable that the ruined or entirely vanished chapels of our district

were built in that age of piety.* We know from Bede that there was a monastery at Dacre in Cumberland, which existed at least until 926.† It has been suggested that a certain monastery, founded by a Northumbrian nobleman in the reign of Osred (slain in 717) was situated at Heversham in Westmorland.‡ Certainly at Heversham may be seen the fragments of a cross wrought in patterns such as experts ascribe to the Anglian school of workmanship introduced by Wilfrith.§

Then too a thrilling event in hagiological history touched our parts nearly. When the monks of Lindisfarne fled before the ravaging Danes with St. Cuthbert's body, they went westward for safety, and their wanderings brought them into Cumberland and Westmorland.‖ A gap in their travels which the antiquary has yet failed to trace may possibly have been filled by a route through Craven—that perpetual haunt of refugees—and about Morecambe Bay.

Certainly a well-used road must have passed not far from our district in the days of Northumbrian anarchy, when Danish kings and allies reigned alike at York and at Dublin. Windermere indeed is associated with the murder (741) of two young princes of the royal house.¶

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* See "Lost Churches in the Carlisle Diocese." *Transactions* Cumberland and Westmorland Antiquarian Society, vol. xv.

† See *Victorian History of Cumberland.*

‡ See Bates's *History of Northumberland.*

§ See *Sculptured Crosses of the Diocese of Carlisle.* Calverley & Collingwood.

‖ See "Translation of St. Cuthbert." *Transactions* Cumberland and Westmorland Antiquarian Society, part 1, vol. ii.

¶ See D. F. Hodgkin's *History of Northumberland.*

THE DEDICATION

TO the question so often asked, When was the church of Grasmere founded? no more than a conjectural answer can be given. The district formed part—though a remote one—of Northumbria, and doubtless shared in the conversion of that kingdom. Even before that time it may have been touched by those successive missionary efforts, which have been happily classed as the Romano-British of Ninian at the end of the fourth century, the Irish of Patrick in the fifth century, and the Kymric of Kentigern in the sixth; and these efforts were followed up by the steady work of the Anglo-Scottish monks, and the establishment under the Anglian kings of an organized church.*

The dedication of the Grasmere church favours the supposition that its foundation was early. Its name-saint is King Oswald, who planted a cross as a standard in the battle by which he gained Northumbria, and who was killed at Maserfeld by the heathen Penda in 642. He became the idol of the Northumbrian christians, and his relics were cherished in many a shrine. When danger threatened Lindisfarne, his head was placed for safety in the coffin of St. Cuthbert;† and with this sacred burden the monks, as stated above, fled westward, wandering for years in parts adjacent to Westmorland, if they did not actually cross its borders.

A well in the Grasmere valley shared the dedication with the church, and indeed may have been antecedent

* See "Lost Churches in Carlisle Diocese," *Transactions* Cumberland and Westmorland Antiquarian Society, vol. xv.

† Where it is still, with the mark of a cut from sword or battle-axe plain to see.—Ed.

to it, as a place of resort. It is at the foot of Kelbarrow (formerly Kelbergh,* the hill of the spring) ; and the Celts were wont to decorate their *kels* or springs with votive offerings of a heathen kind. The church, however, always took care to possess herself of such wells, absorbing any sanctification that was ascribed to them ; and the water of St. Oswald's well continued to be carried to the church for baptisms until quite recent times.†

Church and well are not, however, close together. The well springs in the flat meadow between the path to the Wray and Wray Beck, but it is now covered in. The adjacent bay of the lake is called Well-foot, and the bridge over the beck has the same name ; and when the Wray property was " boundered " in 1683, the " welfoot bridge" was spoken of.

It is suggestive that the farmstead close by owns the name of Pavement End, being formerly known as Padmire. Could it be proved that the name is an ancient one, the idea that the spot was much resorted to of old would be confirmed, since the causeway went so far and no farther.‡

* Monkbergh by Windermere has become Mountbarrow.

† The spot was pointed out to Mrs. Simpson by the Rev. Edward Jefferies, who from 1840 was curate in charge.

‡ I find, however, in deeds of the early seventeenth century, only *Padman* hereabouts. Or is this a mistake for Padmar ? Padman appears in the register.

THE SITE

THE present site of the church may not have been the original one. It is hardly a likely halting-place for a travelling preacher. The Roman road which traversed the valley could neither have been the present one, that leads to church and village, nor the straight cut from Town End that passes the Swan Inn. Both of these cross the flat bottom ; and the Romans from the summit of White Moss (by which they certainly entered the vale) would never have dropped into the marsh below (even now water-logged in places), only to climb out again, to that gap of the Raise that plainly beckoned them to their goal northward. Instead, they would maintain their level as far as might be, and keep along the firm slope of the fells at a height of some 300 to 400 feet ; then, with only two rapid becks to ford, they would come easily and gradually to the ascent of the pass. It is interesting to find that along this presumed route there exists a line of scattered homesteads ; while the modern road below was—until the recent spurt in building, vacant but for a cottage and the Swan Inn ; and this last stands in reality on an ancient cross "loaning" between the higher road suggested, and the village. Many of these homesteads have been turned into houses for the wealthy, and great alterations have taken place ; but a track the whole way may still be made out, though hidden in places by private drives and occupation roads. From White Moss it dropped but little at first, passing behind the highest of the modern houses, according to the belief of old people, who say that this section of it, though remembered, was stopped up before their time. It touched How Head, a farmhold

now deserted; then the Hollins, Forest Side, Ben Place and Beck Houses. It crossed Greenhead Gill and passed behind Knott Houses, Winterseeds and Gillside, continuing by the present ford over Tongue Gill, whence the pass is soon gained.

Now of these names many represented of old not one house, but a couple or even a group. Doubtless most of them were planted by the Norse settlers either upon or below the Roman road, on some spot conveniently above their meadows and common field; and devious lanes would in time become trodden between one and another, to the final discarding of the old straight track. Still this can be traced in places; and a bit to be seen above Winterseeds is probably the actual Roman road. A stone celt was recently found in the beck close below it. A quern was also found not far off.* The fact that a smithy existed until recently at Winterseeds—which is only reached now by climbing the steep brow from the main road—is strong presumptive evidence of an old line of traffic passing by it. There the last of the smiths, John Watson, made the ironwork of the present outer church-door. When he became old, a smithy was set up on the lower road, at Tongue Gill.

Now it is a singular fact that a field lying a little below this road, near the gateway of Forrest Side, bears the name of Kirk How. And there is a tradition attached to the spot. It is said that the church of the valley was to have been built here, and that the materials were even gathered together ready for the start; when lo! they vanished in the night-time, only to be found upon the present site, and that a second attempt only produced a like result, the inference being conveyed, by sly looks and chuckles on the part of the narrator, that the task had been

* See *Transactions* Cumberland and Westmorland Antiquarian Society, N.S. 3, p. 419.

wrought by some supernatural Being, not to be lightly mentioned. Whether this was the Hob, or Hobthrush who played so large a part in the stories of the past, cannot be said, but the legend, in its humorous fearlessness, and love of a practical joke, is characteristic of the dalesman,* and coupled with the name of the field it is suggestive. It seems possible that here, at a spot where a traveller upon the road might so conveniently halt and set up his cross and portable altar, an early rude (perhaps timbered) structure may actually have once stood. A well, too, for baptism was not far off. There is one in the grounds of the Hollins whose water has remained in repute, and which was examined by an expert at the time (1843) when an effort was made to establish a hydropathic cure in Grasmere.† The water was then pronounced finer than that of St. Oswald's Well; but as the owner of the land would not sell, the establishment was placed at the Wray, close to St. Oswald's. The enterprise, started by Mr. Phillips, and conducted by a resident doctor and a German bathman, was not successful, and was given up in five or six years. If the well at the Hollins ever had a name, it is now unknown.

It is hard not to let conjecture play round this tradition of a change of site. Might it not actually have been made? Could it be connected with the turning of Grasmere into a manor, and with the parcelling out of a demesne in the valley? The barons of Kendal, of whom Ivo de Talbois was the first, possessed all these parts, from the time of Henry I. He and his successors governed by feudal methods, through agents. There was here no intermediary lord between baron and vassal; and the baron's

* The same legend is attached to three Lancashire churches, the foundations of which date back to Saxon times. One is St. Oswald's, Winwick, where the saint's well was once a place of resort. Tradition has preserved, in the case of St. Chad's, Rochdale, some particulars of the elfish rabble who wrought the change. See *Memorials of Old Lancashire*, vol. —, p. 91-92.

† From Edward Wilson, parish verger till November, 1906. His father, a joiner like himself, did the woodwork for the hydropathic establishment.

officers—his bailiffs and his foresters—would be placed in secure houses or fenced lodges, whence they would control and govern. A demesne of Grasmere is mentioned on the death of William de Lindesay, 1233, and a manor and park in a charter of 1297.* The woods sold by Henry the Eighth in 1544 were the residue of the lord's forest; he being the inheritor of the Fee.

Now we may reasonably suppose this demesne to have been planted in Kirktown, as the present village came to be called, where the meadows were rich and the soil deep for ploughing, but distant from, and below the ancient line of road with its scattered homesteads. The demesne made a village nucleus; for all the accessories of a manor house would spring up about it. We know the lord's brewery was not far off, at Kelbergh, where springs—beside the holy one—are still abundant.† In a rental, dated 1375‡ that concerned the part of Grasmere then held by the Hotham and Pedwardyn families, it is stated that "Richard Smyth holds the forge and should render 12d and 1d," with the addition that he pays 2s 0d per annum for "Kelebergh." From another document we learn that certain tenants of Grasmere pay an unspecified sum for the brewery of Keldbergh.

This manorial centre was united to the high line of road on the other side of the valley by several ways. One, a footpath, still passes hard by Kirk How, a now disused smithy being upon it. Two others approach and meet to cross Raise Beck together by White Bridge, the name indicative of a stone fabric at a time when timber was commoner. Here the village pinfold still stands.

What more natural than that the church should be added to this central group, and at a time perhaps when

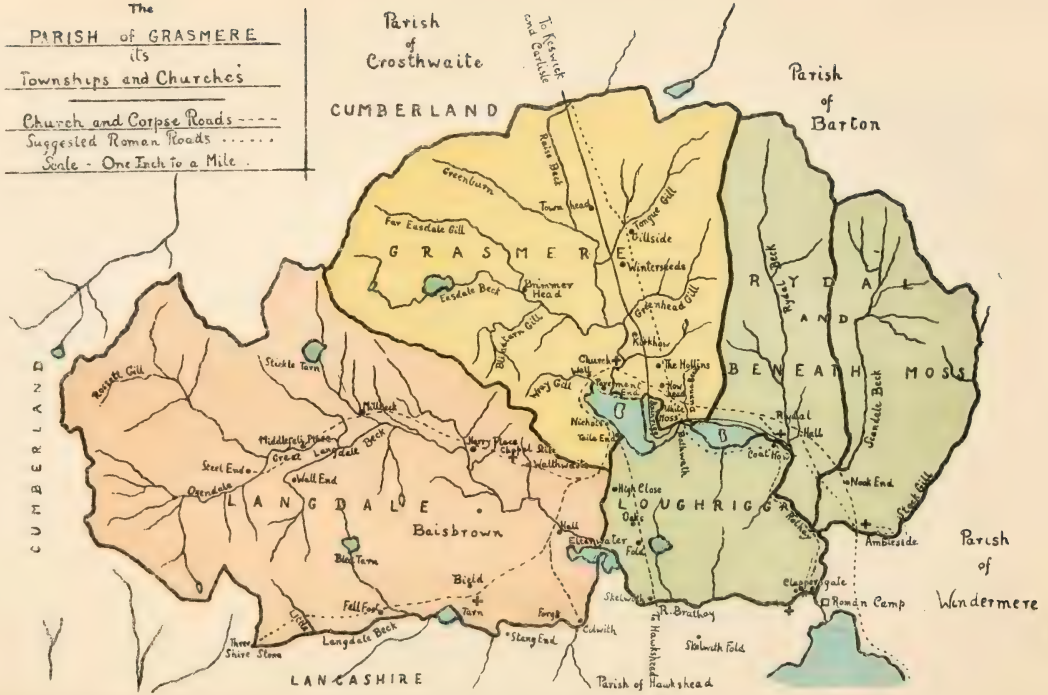
* Inquisition post mortem. *Calendar Patent Rolls*, 25 Edward I.

† The modern house built upon the knoll had a well within it, and behind the house—where a hidden runner gushes out by a rock—there are traces of old pavement.

‡ Levens Hall MSS.

enlarged space and entire rebuilding of an existing edifice required to be done? The site by the river would afford deep soil for burial. To such a change of site (supposing it were made) there would naturally be opposition from some quarter; whence the tradition.

This, however, is but conjecture. The fabric of the present church shows no feature that is of a certainty older than the introduction of manorial rule into Grasmere; while it may be as late as the fourteenth century. But before considering the question of its age, it will be well to point out other evidences of the existence of a church in the valley before record began, and then pass on to such scant records as time has left to us.


The
PARISH of GRASMERE
its
Townships and Churches
Church and Corpse Roads ----
Suggested Roman Roads .....
Scale - One Inch to a Mile.
Parish of Crosthwaite
CUMBERLAND
To Keswick and Carlisle
Parish of Barton
Rain Beck
Greenburn
Tour Head
Far Easedale Gill
Tongue Gill
Billside
GRASMER E
Wintersteeds
Easedale Beck
Brimmer Head
Greenhead Gill
Rydal Beck
RYDAL
AND
BENEATH MOSS
Butharlyn Gill
Rowfoot
Church Well
The Hollins
Wray Gill
Nook
Nicholas Gate End
Rydal Hall
Coat How
Scandale Beck
Nook End
Steel Gill
Rothay
Ambleside
Parish of Windermere
Roman Camp
Cheapside
R. Brathay
Skelwith
Skelwith Fold
Hawkshead
Parish of Hawkshead
CUMBERLAND
Rossett Gill
Stickle Tarn
Millbeck
Middle Fell Place
Great Langdale Beck
Harry Place
Chapel Rig
Wallthwaite
Steel End
Oxendale
Wall End
LANGDALE
Baisbrown
High Close
LOUGHRIGG
Ogle
Wall
Elterwater
Fold
Black Tarn
Bigld
Fell Foot
Tarn
Forge
Three Shire Stone
Langdale Beck
Slang End
Colwith
LANCASHIRE

PART II

THE PARISH

BOUNDARIES

THE TOWNSHIPS

LEGAL ASPECTS OF THE CHURCH

THE EIGHTEEN

THE PARISH

THE church of Grasmere is found when record begins, serving as the centre of a large and regularly constituted parish. The date of the creation of this parish is not known ; but from the fact that its southern boundary runs by the Stock Beck—thus cutting the now thriving town of Ambleside into two parts, one of which belonged to Grasmere and the other to Windermere—there seems a probability of it having been delineated at an early period, when the *sæter* of some Norse settler was but an insignificant clearing in the forest.

Every parish is but a unit in a complex Church organization, which passes upwards by rural deanery, archdeaconry, to diocese. In historical evolution, there is a descent from the greater to the less ; while each successive ecclesiastical demarcation followed as a rule some political line of kingdom or state. The diocese for instance was conterminous with the Anglo-Saxon kingdom ; the parish represented the township, or the manor.

But in the vast kingdom of Northumbria the superposition of church boundaries upon state boundaries was

not so simple a matter, and the subdivisions that took place are not easy to trace. Archbishop Theodore, when called in by King Egfrith (678) to portion his kingdom for purposes of church rule, made at least three bishoprics out of the one whose centre—after a removal to Lindisfarne—was fixed at York.*

Next, the archdeaconries were marked out under Thomas, Archbishop of York, some time between 1070 and 1100. The archdeaconry of Richmondshire, lying in the mountainous region west of the old Anglian kingdom, was a great and peculiar province, and the archdeacon ruled over it with almost the powers of a bishop.†

The archdeaconry was divided again into rural deaneries, of which Kendal was one. This deanery embrace ten parishes, Grasmere being the westermost of them. It appears singular that this group of ten parishes lay in three different counties,—Yorkshire, Lancashire, and Westmorland; and from this circumstance it has been argued that here (as in our own parish) the ecclesiastical division was made prior to the political one of counties. This probably was so; and it is clear that the deanery represents in reality another political area, viz.: that of the barony of Kendal created by William Rufus.‡

Kirkby Kendale, the *caput* of the barony, became from this period the official church centre. There the Synods and Archidiaconal Courts were held, and all dues were paid which the higher church authorities exacted from the

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* Bright's *Early Church History*, p. 291. Bishop Browne's *Theodore and Wilfrith*, pp. 132 and 690.

† It may possibly represent an old sub-kingdom of Northumbria, and is suggestive of Edwin's conquest of a district to the north-west called by the Britons Teyrnllwg. See Rhys's *Celtic Britain* (quoted in "Rydal," *Westmorland Gazette*, May 2nd, 1903). It contained large portions at least of that great church province which Wilfrid made over to Ripon Minster, which was for a short time the seat of a bishop. The creation of Richmond as a centre was a late Norman measure.

‡ Whitaker's *History of Richmondshire*. Dr. Wilson (*Victorian History of Cumberland*) gives 1120 to 1130 as dates between which Henry I. marked out the county divisions as fiscal areas. In the latter year the new county of Westmarieland was placed under the jurisdiction of a separate sheriff.

parishes—Grasmere among them.* Thither the rector or his substitute, along with the churchwardens, annually repaired.

The exact relationship between the central church at Kirkby and the churches of Grasmere and Windermere in early days is hard to make out. They were considered in some sort as dependencies, and were called chapels after they had become parish churches. This uncertain position recalls the constitution of the early British church. And it must be remembered that Theodore's *parochia* was not a parish but a diocese. Again, the laws of Edgar (959-975) place churches in three classes : first, the ancient church or monastery of a district; second, the church with a corpse-ground ; and third, the church without a corpse-ground.† Tithes moreover were enjoined to be paid to the ancient or central church.

Now Grasmere may at first have ranked in the third order, as a mission church (*capella*). It would in that case pay its tithes, or a large proportion of them, to Kirkby Kendal, and bury its christian dead within the consecrated soil of that church. It may not have acquired the right of burial until the lord created a demense there.‡ This view is strengthened by the fact that the church of Kendale claimed certain dues from Grasmere and Windermere down to a late date. One was a pension of 13s. 4d. (one mark)

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* For the connection between mother churches and chapelries or vicarages under them, see *History of English Church*, edited by Dean Stephens, vol. ii., p. 295. ["Walter Gray, Archbishop of York in 1233 consolidated 10 chapelries in the two parishes of Pocklington and Pickering into five vicarages, two and two. Each vicar had two chapels, and was endowed with a sum to support chaplains at both, while he also paid a small sum annually to the mother church in token of subjection."] From the rural deanery of Kendal there were paid the following dues, according to an old voucher, c. 1320 : at Easter 12s. od. for Synodalia ; at Michaelmas £4 16s 8d for Procurationes ; besides £3 for Presumptiones, and £3 9s 6d in Peter's pence—a goodly tribute this for the Pope from our mountains lands ! Whitaker's *History of Richmondshire*.

† Selden's *History of Tithes*. Easterby's *Law of Tithes*, pp. 4, 8, and 13.

‡ The early practice of burial in distant churches is inexplicable to this age. But it should be remembered that in early days man was a peripatetic animal, to whom the distance between Grasmere and Kendal, or Hawkshead and Dalton, would be slight ; and that a corpse wrapped in a winding-sheet would be much lighter than one coffined.

paid to the vicar out of the tithes of the parish. The other was a mortuary fee, exacted by him as late as the seventeenth century.*

* Of the first, still paid, there is plenty of evidence. It was even allowed during the Commonwealth. In 1645 the Rydal Hall account-sheets show that arrears were paid to the Kendal parson out of the tithes " upon order for 5 yeares stypd out of Gresmire," amounting to £3 6s 8d or five marks. Next year is entered " Rent due to mr. M. out of Gresmire tithes " 13s 6d. The order came from the Puritan Committee at Kendal.

A mortuary, or corpse present, was distinct from a burial fee, and was supposed to cover any obligation forgotten by the dead man to church or priest. The claim anciently was upon his second best animal, the best going to his feudal lord ; but it came to be paid in coin ; while a law was passed (21 Henry VIII.) limiting the sum to 10s., and that only when the deceased owned goods to the value of £40. Dr. Cox, *Parish Registers of England*. The following receipt is in existence for a fee paid to Kendal on the death of Edward Walker of Rydal, who was buried in his parish church of Grasmere :—

" Jan ; the 2nd Anno Domj 1652.

Rec. p. fr ye Executors of Edward Walker ye Sume of ffive shillings in full satisfaction of a Mortuary due to ye Vicar of Kendall by me Tho : Willain I say received the day and yeare abouesd by me Tho : Willain ye aforesd sume of 5s od."

BOUNDARIES

THE boundary of the parish of Grasmere followed geographical lines. Starting from the point where the Rothay and the Brathay unite for their entrance into Windermere, it ascended the first river for a short distance until it reached the tributary, Stock beck. This it ascended until, near the source, it struck upwards to the line of the watershed. It then followed a devious course along the mountain tops, as " heven watter deales " (divides), according to the quaint old boundary phrase. Always clinging to the sky line between waters flowing north and south, it dropped to Dunmail Raise, to rise to the tops again. From these lonely heights it made another short artificial course to reach Little Langdale beck near the source, and with these waters—named Brathay after emerging from Elterwater—it continued to the uniting place of the two rivers at Bird-house Mouth. Thus, with the exception of the right bank of the Brathay, the parish embraced the whole area of the two valleys of the Rothay and Brathay and their confluents. Its boundary marched with that of parishes in Westmorland, Cumberland and Lancashire. Its northern line was for centuries the boundary between the Anglian rule, and the Celtic kingdom of Cumbria. Its circuit counted some thirty-five miles by flat measurement ; but much of it lay on summits that reach to a great height.

THE TOWNSHIPS

THIS parish—a wild tract of fells, becks, and tarns, was divided into three component parts.

It has been pointed out* that the ancient church of Northumbria left certain marks upon the districts she administered which may yet be distinguished. One peculiarity was the great extent of the parishes, some of which embraced several—occasionally many—townships. Another was, that each parish was governed secularly by a body of men known as the Twenty-four. Now Grasmere conformed nearly, though not exactly, with these rules ; for the controlling body consisted of Eighteen, not Twenty-four, being in this respect like the Cumbrian parish of Crosthwaite to the north. But other parishes of the district had their Twenty-four—as Cartmel and Dalton in Furness.† In the next parish of Windermere, the Twenty-four are still an active body, and collect at the church every Easter Tuesday, eight coming from each of the three townships, Under-Milbeck, Applethwaite and Troutbeck.

The parish of Grasmere also embraced three townships. One was Grasmere proper, situated in the basin-shaped vale that catches the sources of the Rothay, Langdale ; the sister valley formed the second township, which extended to Elterwater ; the third was Rydal-and-Lough-

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* Creighton's *Historical Essays*.

† At Cartmel in 1642 measures were taken "for the makinge upp of the twentie-fourte . . . . that there may be four in everye churchwardens division as hath formerlie been used." Stockdale's *Annales Caermoelensis*.

rigg (often called Loughrigg and Beneath-Moss) which included all the rocky mass between the converging rivers, the compact village of Rydal with part of Ambleside.

From three sides of the parish then, by mountain path and " horse-trod," the folk wended their way for worship to Grasmere Church. Those of the vale of Grasmere proper would gather in units or little groups from all the scattered farmsteads, from Far Easdale and Blindtarn Gill, from Town Head, Gill Side, and all the houses that lay " Aboon Beck " as far as How Head and Town End, till they met at their lych-gate on the north side of the church.

From Loughrigg and Beneath-Moss they would collect by many a devious track, starting as far back as Clappersgate and Ambleside. From Ambleside ancient "trods" passed Nook End, and rose from Scandale Bridge by easy grade to Nab Lane (where Rydal folk would join them) and White Moss, and thence descending to cross the church bridge to enter the garth by the present gate, which was specially their own.

The third stream of worshippers flowed from the farthest sources west, from the recesses of Little Langdale, from Blea Tarn, and Fell Foot, from Forge and Hackett and Colwith they came, on through Elterwater, and across Walthwaite Bottom. Mounting the brow, they would meet a tributary stream of fellow-townsfolk, that gathered right from Steel End and Wall End, increasing as it flowed down Mickle Langdale, till it crossed the ridge of Hunting Stile. Dropping steeply into the vale, they would at Nichols (where stood an inn) meet a third contingent (from Loughrigg) which, starting at Skelwith, mounted by Foul Step to Little Loughrigg, passed by the Fold, the Oaks and Scroggs, to descend by Red Bank to the level of Grasmere Lake.* From Nichols onward the united

* There is a tradition that a route from Skelwith Bridge dropped sharply

groups would travel by the lake, and past the Holy Well, to enter the church garth by a gate at the north-west angle, now gone, called the Langdale gate.† Here, at Church Stile, stood an important inn, long owned by the Harrison family. Shelter and a fire must indeed have been often needed (as well as something for the inner man) after the long travel—especially at funeral gatherings, when the corpse had to be borne through ford and flood, or through the storms and deep snows of winter time. The Ambleside folk, when in 1674 they petitioned their bishop for the right of burial in their chapel, stated that " by reason of the heat in summer and the great snowes and sudden inundations of water in winter it is very difficult and dangerous to carry their dead thither [to Grasmere] for burial " ;‡ yet their distance from the church was nothing like that of the Langdale folk. There were not infrequent burials from the right bank of Little Langdale beck, in the parish of Hawkshead or of " Ulverston."

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from the top of Red Bank to the old ford of the Rothay known as Bathwath (Rydal Hall MSS.), and that it had even been used for funerals. This seems unlikely, unless the use were a repetition of a custom that had prevailed before the present Red Bank road was made ; and of superstitious adherence to old corpse-roads the Rev. J. C. Atkinson (*Forty Years in a Moorland Parish*) gives instances. There may indeed have been once a well-trodden path there. In former times a fulling-mill stood on the left bank of the Rothay, near to the ford, and within the freehold property of Bainrigg. The mill was owned by the Benson family in the fifteenth century, but Bainrigg had belonged before that time to a family of de Bainbrigg, who had at least one capital dwelling or mansion-house standing upon it. Now a road to this house or houses there must have been. The woodman recently found a track leading up from the site of the mill to the rocky height, which emerged upon the present Wishing-Gate road. On the line of this (which was engineered as a turnpike road only about 1770–80) the older way doubtless continued towards Grasmere, past How Top and through Town End. A huge stone standing on this line was known as the How Stone. Levi Hodgson who lived at How Top, and who described the route to Mr. W. H. Hills, remembered fragments of a cottage in the wood. If the Skelwith Bridge folk ever used it as a church path, they would meet their townsmen (who had come over White Moss) at How Top. Close by there is still a flat-topped boulder used for resting burdens upon.

† This gate is shown in a map of 1846, as well as the stile which gave its name to the house then still standing, that was immediately opposite. Both disappeared at the widening of the lane from Stock Bridge to the church.

‡ Ambleside Town and Chapel.

Once within the churchyard, the different streams of the townships mingled as fellow parishioners. The sexes however, divided, the women seeking entrance (presumably) by the great south porch, and the men (after business done) herding in by the west door, known as theirs. Yet once inside, they again fell rigorously into ranks of townships, as we shall see.

The gathering of the dalesfolk for worship must have been a striking sight, especially on the great feast days when—four times in the year—the sacraments were administered. Certainly attendance at church was obligatory upon every Sabbath Day, and fines were levied for default. But from the early seventeenth century, if not before, the dependent chapels in Langdale (at Chapel Stile) and Ambleside would absorb many of the more distant worshippers. For the four great celebrations, however, the whole of the adult population of the valleys, except the sick and infirm, would attend the parish church.* It is of course impossible to compute the number of the people, especially in early times; but if we accept the statement made in the Presentment of 1712, that there were then about 200 families in the parish, it may be reckoned that at that time and for at least a century previously, no fewer than from 500 to 700 communicants would gather for the rite. Besides the master and mistress of the homestead, there were grown-up sons

* It is not easy to discover what was the early practice of the church concerning the administration of the sacrament, or the number of times it was received yearly by the laity. As early as 750, laymen who failed to communicate at Christmas, Easter, and Pentecost, were not esteemed christians; they were expected to make offerings four times a year. A later rule, which was stringent, seems to have been once a year, though a more frequent attendance—specially at Easter and Christmas, was urged. See Abbot Gasquet's *Parish Life in Medieval England*, Wall's *Old English Parishes*, p. 90, and Wordsworth's *Medieval Services in England*. The sacrament was called *housel*, and the bread *houselling-bread*. Henry VII's queen, Elizabeth of York, appears to have communicated three times a year, at the festivals of Easter, All Saints, and Christmas (Canon Simmon's *Notes to the Lay Folks' Mass Book*, p. 239). Queen Victoria no doubt clung to an old custom when she communicated no oftener than three or four times a year. (See *Life*.)

and daughters, with farm servants.* The garth would be crowded with the concourse of folk; and when they trooped into the fane, each township to its own quarter of the building, where men and women again divided to take their accustomed places upon their separate forms, and the dogs sneaked in, hoping to escape the dog-whipper's eye as they settled under their masters' legs, the whole space must have been packed.

The old, narrow close-set forms seated far more people than the modern benches, but even they could not have accommodated the crowds that attended certain funerals. (See Charities.) At Mrs. Fleming's funeral, for instance, few short of 2000 persons must have been present, including dole-getters, neighbours and relatives.

* The population must have been greater when the Kendal trade in cloth was at its height. There were 1300 "houseling people" reported for the parish of Windermere in 1549 (Commission quoted in Mr. Brydson's *Sidelights on Mediæval Windermere*, p. 95), and there is no reason to suppose that Grasmere was far behind. At the same time the numbers to collect at one celebration would be considerably lessened if the Easter communion were spread over several occasions, as was the case in the late seventeenth century at Clayworth, Notts, where celebrations were held on Palm Sunday, Good Friday, as well as Easter Day. All parishioners—to judge from the rector's careful record—must at this season have communicated; but at the celebrations of Whitweek and Christmas (for there was none at Michaelmas) the numbers were much lower. (*Rector's Book of Clayworth*).

SOME LEGAL ASPECTS OF THE CHURCH

THUS for worship did the folk gather in the church. They came thither also to bury their dead within consecrated soil—for baptism of their "barnes" by the priest, and the binding of man and woman in holy matrimony. But the edifice and the enclosed space about it served in early times not only for purposes of religion, but of the law. Like the Roman Forum, it was used for the transaction of public business and the administration of justice. Bargains were ratified, covenants were witnessed, and protestations made solemn by an oath taken upon the Holy Gospel where it lay upon the altar—once a wonderful script illuminated and jewelled, that is now represented by the dirty little Testament of the Law Courts. Manor Courts and legal enquiries or inquests were frequently held within it. Public notices that concerned the townships—private ones even of auctions and the like—were proclaimed before the assembled people in the garth or the porch, if not in the building itself. Punishments for moral offences were carried out in face of the congregation.*

* We have no evidence of this to show for Grasmere Church. But in 1622 "Sir" Richard Pearson, curate of Troutbeck, was empowered by the rector of Windermere to publicly revoke the sentence of excommunication under which one Adam Birkhead lay. An edict was issued from the registry of the Archdeaconry of Richmondshire as late as 1715, citing a form of penance to be gone through by George Birkett, who before the congregation of Troutbeck, and in "penitential habit," was to confess his grievous sin of incest with his deceased wife's sister. An additional note, however, empowered Mr. Barton, rector of Windermere, and Mr. Grisedale, curate, to use their discretion as to the manner of confession, and to allow the sinner, if properly penitent, to make it "in his Ordinary apparell" (Browne MSS.). It may have been the dislike of public penance, with its peculiar habit, that caused the churchwardens of Grasmere so often, and so incorrectly, to return a clean bill of morality in their Presentments.

The priests and the clergy acted as legal agents for the unlettered folk till comparatively recent times. They were versed in the intricacies of law, as well as ritual, and skilled in penmanship and the Latin tongue. The higher of them are found acting as agents and accountants for the holders of the fees into which the barony became split, as documents which concern our parish show.

Frequently the chaplain or the village priest drew up indentures, petitions, and secular agreements for the living, as well as the testaments of the dying. Wills were proved at the church registry of the diocese, and were stored there. The wills of the parish of Grasmere went to the town of Richmond, the centre of the archdeaconry; and not until 1719 were they proved at the secular courts of Kendal and Lancaster.*

Instances of the use of the church fabric for secular purposes in the neighbourhood may be quoted. A Court Roll of 1443 is headed "Court of Wynandremere held at the church of Wynandremere 9 July 21 Henry VI." † An award concerning a private dispute in 1534 between George Browne of Troutbeck and Myles Dickson of Applethwaite decrees that the former pay to the latter "upon the secunde sonday in lente next comynge O–XLs of able ynglyshe money upon or. layde Alter in Wyndandermer church betwixe VIII of the clock and XII of the said sonday." ‡ Again, an indenture made 1571 between Mr. John Benson and his Baisbrowne tenants stipulates that the payment of certain moneys should be made "in langdaill chappell betweene thoures of eyght of the clock at aftr. noine" on the 1st of August in the two ensuing years.§ In 1601, when Widow Agnes Fleming of Rydal

* *Wills and Inventories of the Archdeaconry of Richmondshire* (Rev. J. Raine). The privilege of probate was withdrawn finally from ecclesiastical courts by Act of 1857 (Dr. Cox's *History of Parish Registers*).

† Public Record Office Court Roll 207/122.

‡ Browne MSS.

§ Rydal Hall MSS.

Hall with her sons sued a Penrith man for debt, the commissioners sat and examined witnesses in Ambleside Chapel.* And within this building were probably taken down depositions in several other cases.

As regards Grasmere itself record is scant. The manorial courts were occasionally held in the Moot Hall of Kirkby Kendal, as in 1603,† but in early times it would be impossible to summon the holders from so far; and it is stated in 1436 that two courts were yearly held in Grasmere.‡ No other building than the church could have contained this official gathering. The judgment on the 1583 tithe dispute enjoined that the parishioners were to pay their tithe of lambs in money every Easter "in the parish church of Gresmier." The church or chapel was as a rule the schoolroom where the priest taught.

The churchyard, even more than the church itself, had its secular and popular uses, which came down from ancient time. The fairs, the markets, the sports and the wrestlings§ which took place within its enclosing walls, and of which we obtain faint intimations, were but the survival of the festivals sanctioned by the early church, when the wake, or fair of the patron saint was kept. This again, with its bull-baiting, its rude sports and its temporary stalls, may be linked on to the earlier rites of heathen times, when beasts were brought to the Temple for sacrifice, and when the people built booths about it, in which to hold a three days' feast. The annual or biennial fair, and even the Sunday market, were quite usual in the churchyard, before the boroughs obtained a special privilege for them. And though an express statute in 1285 forbade the practice, neither this nor the

* Rydal Hall MSS.

† Public Record Office Court Roll 207/111.

‡ Church inquisition post mortem, Henry VI., No. 36.

§ See Coulton's *Chaucer and his England*, where miracle-plays and dances are added to the list.

later injunction of the Church were heeded. In 1300 the town of Cockermouth complained that its market was spoilt by the bartering carried on at Crosthwaite Church, where not only flesh and fish were sold at festivals (and this distinctly smacks of an ancient sacrificial practice) ; but that corn, linen, cloth and other commodities were conveyed thither every Sunday for barter. In 1380 the town of Appleby was suffering from a like cause. Merchants were carrying their goods to sell in the churchyards of the surrounding district on Sundays, to the detriment of the accredited market.* If this was done in other places of the district, it was certainly done at Grasmere, for the market town of Kendal was sixteen miles distant on a road often impassable.†

It was not until the seventeenth century that markets were established in the neighbouring towns of Hawkshead and Ambleside, after Grasmere had in vain attempted to secure the privilege.*

A good deal of informal business besides was conducted in the churchyard, such as sales proposed or private bargains struck. Of proclamations and sale notices made within the church or garth we have abundant evidence ; and for these the clerk received generally a fee of 2d. No doubt the " citation " we hear of for tithe wool due to Squire John Fleming (1631) was made at the church. The prohibition against cutting wood in Bainrigg (1768) which the Rev. J. Wilson suggested should " be given at our church of sunday " and which was to deprive the holder of his winter fuel, has been preserved.§ In recent times, according to Edward Wilson, the notices were given out by the clerk in the yard, outside the so-called men's or western door.

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* Calendar Patent Rolls, 4 Richard II., p. 1.
† Browne MSS.
‡ Rydal Hall MSS.
§ Rydal Hall MSS.

The officers of the townships transacted business at church; and the notices still hung in church porches are a survival of the custom. The overseers of the poor worked in fact in close connection with the wardens; and the latter were responsible for some county rates which are found entered in their accounts, such as (1708) "To the Jaylor at Appleby" and "Prisoner Money." The Overseers' books for Rydal and Loughrigg show that when they failed to board a pauper within their township, they paid to the clerk 2d. "for advertising her to let."

The constable (and there was one for each township) had a far older connection with the parish church. He caused meetings for his division to be proclaimed at the church. Among the miscellaneous duties which he still performed in late times was payment for the slaughter of harmful beasts and birds. The heads of these were hung, we are told, on the church gates as visible proof; and Stockdale, writing in 1872,* says that he has seen them so exposed both at Cartmel and Hawkshead. The same practice no doubt prevailed at Grasmere. The constable's books for Rydal and Loughrigg record 4d. as the price usually given for a raven's head, and 3s. 4d. for that of a fox. In 1786, 5s. 0d. was paid "for one old Fox and two young ones." Ravens were frequently entered, and as the payments went to William Parke, we must suppose them to have been taken on the precipice of Nab Scar. Five were paid for in 1787, and twelve in 1790. These would decorate the Rydal and Loughrigg gate. Two foxes were paid for in 1793.

* *Annales Caermoelensis.*

THE EIGHTEEN

NOT Twenty-four, but Eighteen represented the interests of the townships in the parish church. This was the case also at Crosthwaite in Cumberland, where this ancient body of " sworn " men were swept away by the Charity Commissioners at the time that they took over the schools. Of the Eighteen in Grasmere six represented—along with two wardens—each township. While the wardens, who were all landholders, took office for one year only, and in rotation, like all other officials of the village communities, such as constable, overseer, surveyor of roads, and frithman, the Eighteen appear to have been freely elected, and they kept office for an indefinite period.

The names of those who served the office at the Restoration are given in the important document concerning the fabric of the church printed later, and these names were but slowly altered. In the churchwardens' books of 1723 is written " Then chosen Edward Brockbank to be an Eighteen man for Little Langdale in the place of John Brockbank his father, deceased." Again in 1824 comes " Sides-Man Chosen by the Minister Churchwardens and Sides-men," followed by their names. A list of these was but infrequently written out, only an erasure marking a change, as when in 1708 John Green, serving for Grasmere " being Very Old and infirm, desired to be excused," and Thomas Green took his place.

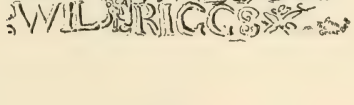
The choice of a new member of the body lay apparently with the Eighteen themselves, the wardens, and the parson. This is still the case in Windermere, where (I

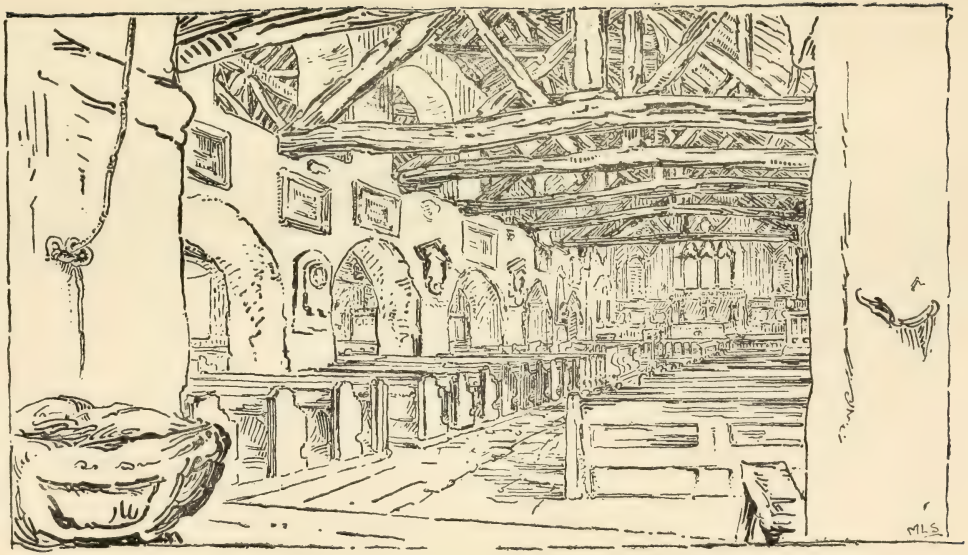
am told) the choice of a new member of the Twenty-four is discussed in full vestry, the clergyman, however, finally nominating.* Yet the Eighteen were acting representatives in church affairs of the folk of the townships. All contracts for the improvement and alteration of the church were made by them. They were responsible for the share of their township in its upkeep, and laid a rate on the landholders to cover the yearly expenses. It is almost certain that the appointment of a clerk and schoolmaster lay with them and the wardens, though the parson no doubt sat at the conclave. We have no means of knowing whether their powers extended further.†

It should be noted that the old name for them was simply "The Eighteen." They are called Questmen in a contract of 1687, but this appears to have been drawn up by a stranger. The term Sidesmen occurs late, and so does "The Twenty-four" which reckons the six wardens, two for each township, in the number. Strictly, the wardens (of whom there were eight in Cartmel) should not be included.

* From Mr. George Browne, one of the Twenty-four.

† At Holme Cultram, Cumberland, a like body—chosen, however, by the people themselves—were responsible for the care of the bridges and common wood, besides providing for the upkeep of the sea-dyke. See "The Sixteen Men of Holme Cultram," *Transactions*, Cumberland and Westmorland Antiquarian Socisty, N.S., 3. The Eighteen of Aston, Oxfordshire, were found in 1583 to have control over the common field and meadow, with the yearly allotments made within them. See "Survival of Archaic Communities," Prof. F. W. Maitland (*Law Quarterly Review*, vol. 9). Prof. Maitland regards the existence of this body as an exceptional case, and thinks it dangerous to assume it to have been a survival of ancient times. Mr. G. G. Coulton in *Chaucer and his England* considers that the Black Death of 1348-9 and the consequent diminution of the clergy may have thrown the people on their own resources, and caused the lay control over parish finances which appears to have dated (he says) from the fifteenth century.





Structure of the Interior of St Oswald's Grasmere.

PART III

RECORDS

PATRONS

MONASTIC CONTROL

THE CLERGY

THE CIVIL WARS

THE COMMONWEALTH

RECORDS

THE church constitution of Grasmere was therefore from early times that of a parish controlled and administered by a body of men representing the people, who were responsible for the funds that maintained the building and its services, while the clergy who officiated were supported by the ancient system of the payment of tithes.

The offering of pious folk of the tenth of their yearly yield was at first intended to cover all expenses, but it soon became diverted into purely ecclesiastical channels. The tithe-paying parish indeed early excited the cupidity of the least scrupulous members of Church and State. Already in 1254 a rector of Grasmere is found to be drawing the revenues of the parish without troubling to serve it except by deputy; for the Pope in that year granted a dispensation to Henry de Galdington, rector of "Grossemer" in the diocese of York, to hold an additional benefice with cure of souls.* This is the first record of the church discovered so far.

* *Calendar of Papal Registers*, vol. ii., p. 294.

The value of the rectory is stated in the dispensation to be ten marks (£6 13s. 4d.). Estimates, however, varied widely. About 1291 a taxation was made out for all ecclesiastical benefices in England, the cause being Pope Nicholas I.'s promise of the tenths which he claimed from them, to Edward I. for a term of six years, towards the expenses of a crusade. This great valuation remained the standard of taxation until the time of Henry VIII. It is said to have been completed for the Province of York in 1292; and it sets down the "church of Gressemere" in the Archdeaconry of Richmondshire as being worth £16, and that of Wynandermere as £10.*

But the high valuation of 1292 did not hold good. Complaints from the northern clergy that through impoverishment by various causes, but chiefly the invasions of the Scots, they were by no means able to pay so high a tax, produced some amelioration. A correction was made in 1318, when Windermere was written down at £2 13s. 4d., and Grasmere at £3 6s. 8d., or five marks. And at this figure it remained.

It stood indeed at five marks in 1283, when the first mention of the church occurs in connection with the secular lordship.

EDITOR'S NOTE.

The writing down of the value of the tithes of Grasmere was the subject of correspondence between the author and myself, and she writes: "The so called taxation of Pope Nicholas IV. was acknowledged to be too high for the Northern Counties; but the reduction of Grasmere, when the alteration was made in 1318, from £16 to five marks (£3 6s. 8d.) is unaccountable to me." It had stood at this figure previously but had been raised to £16, and, as will be seen in the text, as early as 1301 in the reign of Edward I., when the abbot of St. Mary's, York, was

* *Tax. Eccle. P. Nicholai*, IV.

allowed to appropriate " the chapels of Gresmer and Wynandermere," Gresmer is described as being worth £20. In 1344, at the Archbishop's Visitation, it is described as worth 5 marks; only to be again raised in 1435. In that year upon the death of John, duke of Bedford and earl of Kendal, to whom they had been granted by his father, Henry IV., we find among the items of his property " the advowsons of Wynandermere and Gressemere each of which is worth £20 yearly." After this the tithes again reverted to 5 marks and in the reign of Henry VIII. the " pension " paid to the abbey is put down as only half of that sum, viz. £1 13s. 4d. at which it still remains.

The terms " pension " and " advowson " may not always mean the same thing, thus advowson seems to be used sometimes as synonymous with tithe. Hence Miss Armitt writes " The parish churches, such as Kendal, Grasmere, etc., were " taxed " from the twelfth century onward at a certain figure—ten marks (£6 13s. 4d.) £16 or £30. What did this taxation represent? The absolute sum to be paid by the rector from the tithes to king, pope, archdeacon, court, or feudal lord? or was it a valuation only of the tithes, from which was calculated the amounts of the various ' scots ' or annual payments to ecclesiastical or temporal authorities? " It seems not unlikely that the rise from £3 6s. 8d. to £20 in the reign of Edward I. may be accounted for by the fact that the " Old Valor " which was granted by authority of Innocent the fourth to Henry III. in 1253 was superseded in 1291 by the " New Valor " granted to Edward I. by Nicholas IV., so that when Henry IV. granted the chapels of Grasmere and Windermere to his son John they were valued in 1435 at £20 each. They were only being put back to the sum named in the " New Valor " of 1291 which had been allowed in 1344 to drop to the 5 marks at which they had stood in the " Old Valor." The tithe taxation as established by the " New Valor " remained in force until Henry VIII. But a " Nova Taxatio " which only affected part of the province of York was commanded in 11 Edward II. (1317) on account of the invasion of the Scots and other troubles. These various taxings will account for the variation in payments which were collected for the benefit of the king.

W.F.R.

THE PATRONS

WILLIAM RUFUS, upon his conquest of Carlisle, gave over to Ivo de Tailbois all these parts as a fief. After Ivo a confusion of tenure and administration prevails, into which it is useless to enter. The line of patrons of Grasmere may perhaps be begun safely with Gilbert fitz Reinfred, who married Helwise, daughter and heiress of William de Lancaster II., because it was he who first held the Barony of Kendal in chief from Richard I., by charter dated 1190.*

His son William, called de Lancaster III., died in 1246 without a direct heir; and the children of his sisters, Helwise and Alice, shared the fief between them. It is Alice's line that we have to follow. She married William de Lindesey, and her son Walter took that portion of the barony which was later known as the Richmond Fee, and which included the advowson of our church.

Sir William de Lindesey, his son, was the next inheritor. After his death, in 1283, a jury of true and tried men declared that he had died possessed of " A certain chapel there (Gresmer) taxed yearly at 66s 8d." † The chapel of Windermere, set down at a like sum, belonged to the same lordship.

Christiana, William's heiress, was then only 16. She was married to a Frenchman, Ingelram de Gynes, lord of Coucy. There is evidence that they spent a considerable part of their time in these parts, their seat being at Mourholm, near Carnforth. Ingelram indeed fought in the

* *Lancashire Pipe Rolls*, Mr. W. Farrer.
† *Lancashire Inquests, etc.*, ed. by Mr. Farrer.

Scottish wars, as did his son William. Christiana survived her husband some ten years. They had at least four sons, William, Ingelram, Baldwin, and Robert. It was William who inherited the chief part of Christiana's property in the barony of Kendal, which was declared (1334) to include the manor of Wynandermere, and the advowsons of the chapels of Wynandermere, Marieholm, and Gressemere.*

The new tenant at once incurred King Edward III.'s displeasure. His interests lay apparently in France, where he resided, being styled lord of Coucy† ; and without waiting to do homage for his mother's English lands and receiving them formally from the king's hands (as was the feudal custom), he passed them over to his young son William. The king pardoned the offence, and ratified the grant,‡ but he kept the youth, still a minor in 1339, about his person,§ and William's short life seems to have been spent in service under the English banner.‖

The family of de Gynes had a difficult part to play during the wars that followed upon Edward's claim to the throne of France. Their hereditary instincts carried them naturally into the opposite camp, and they lost their English possessions in consequence. On William's death in 1343 the king—while he seems to have acknowledged the claim of his brother Ingelram as his heir,¶ kept the heritage in his own hands. Moreover, he declared such lands as were held by Robert de Gynes, a son of Christiana, who was a cleric and Dean of Glasgow, to be forfeited, because of Robert's adherence to his enemy,** and for the

* *Calendar Patent Rolls*, 8 Edw. III. and 14 Edw. III., pt. 3, mem. 11.
† *Calendar Patent Rolls*, 8 Edw. III. There was a question of a marriage between his daughter Mary and the king's brother.
‡ *Calendar Patent Rolls*, 8 Edw. III.
§ *Calendar Patent Rolls*, 13 Edw. III.
‖ *Calendar Patent Rolls.*
¶ *Calendar Patent Rolls*, 17 Edw. III.
** *Calendar Patent Rolls*, 17 Edw. III.

same reason lands at Thornton in Lonsdale held by Ingelram, son of Ingelram and grandson of Christiana, were likewise forfeited.*

The king presently used the escheated heritage to reward a knight who had served him well in the Scottish wars. John de Coupland had had the courage and address to secure Robert Bruce as prisoner at the battle of Durham; and Edward in 1347 granted to him and his wife for their joint lives the Lindesey Fee which was the inheritance of Ingelram. He excepted, however, from the grant (along with the park and woodlands about Windermere) the knight's fees and advowsons of churches belonging to the same.†

The fortunes of war brought Ingelram, lord of Coucy, and son of Ingelram, William's brother, as hostage for John, king of France, to the court of Edward. There he gained by his handsome person and knightly grace the favour of the king, who granted him the lands of Westmorland which had belonged to his great-grandmother Christiana, created him Earl of Bedford, and gave him in 1365 his daughter Isabella in marriage. Ingelram for some time satisfied his martial instincts by fighting in the wars of Italy and Alsace; but on the renewal of the struggle between England and France, followed by the death of his father-in-law in 1377, his scruples were at an end. He renounced his allegiance to England, haughtily returned the badge of the Order of the Garter, and joined the side of Charles II.‡

The Lindesey Fee was once more forfeited to the Crown. Richard II. granted it, however, to Phillipa, daughter of Ingelram and Isabella, and to her husband Robert de

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* *Calendar of Close Rolls.*

† *Calendar Patent Rolls* and *Close Rolls*, 22 Edw. III.

‡ Rymer's *Foedera*, *Dic. of Nat. Biography*. "Proof that Ingelram Earl of Bedford was son of Ingelram brother of William, who was son of William de Coucy, Christiana's son, is contained in *Inq. p.m.*, 50 Edw. III. (1) No. 18." Mr. W. Farrer.

Vere, earl of Oxford (1382); and when the latter was outlawed by Parliament in 1388 it was confirmed to her.* After her death (1411) she was declared to have been seised of the advowson of the chapel of Grismere, taxed at £10, and that of Wynandermere, taxed at 100s.†

Phillipa had no children. Henry IV. now granted the Fee to his son, John, created duke of Bedford and earl of Kendal. He died in 1435. His property in the barony of Kendal included the "advowsons of Wynandermere and of Gressemere, each of which is worth 20 li yearly." ‡

The Duke of Bedford's widow, Jaquetta of Luxemburg, received the third part of the Fee as her dower, with the advowson "of the church in Gresmere." She married Richard Woodville, created earl Rivers. After her death she is said (1473) to have possessed "the advowson or nomination of the church or chapel of Gressemere," though in 1439 she had allowed her privilege to lapse.§

The Fee was next granted by Henry VI. (who inherited it as heir to his uncle John) to John Beaufort, duke of Somerset.‖ The duke's daughter Margaret—afterwards countess of Richmond—came into possession of it at his death.¶ After a lapse, when Yorkists sat on the throne, and Sir William Parr of Kendal held it, the Fee (now including the advowson of Grasmere) returned to Margaret and passed to her grandson Henry VIII. He sold the advowson and patronage of Grasmere. Its subsequent history will be given later.

Such was the illustrious line of our church's early patrons—some of them the most striking figures in a chivalrous age. But it is not to be supposed that they

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* *Calendar Patent Rolls*, 5 Rich. II., 9 Rich. II., and 2 Hen. IV., part iv.

† *Inq. p.m.* MS. Rawl., B 438, f. 71.

‡ *Inq. p.m.*, 14 Hen. VI., No. 36.

§ *Calendar Patent Rolls*, 1 Edw. IV., pt. 7, mem. 8; and *Inq. p.m.*, 12 Edw. IV., No. 47.

‖ *Calendar Patent Rolls*, 22 Hen. VI.

¶ *Inq. p.m.*, 22 Hen. VI., No. 19.

knew much of the little parish hidden amongst the mountains. When the rectorate fell vacant, they would grant the post to some suppliant clerk or priest, who would carry their nomination to the higher ecclesiastical authorities, The right to nominate often fell into the king's hands, through minority of the heir, confiscation, or inheritance. For instance, the king appointed to the rectory of Windermere in 1282, in 1377 and in 1388. Edward III. nominated Edmund de Ursewyk to "Gressemer" in 1349; and Henry IV. did the same for Walter Hoton in 1401.

MONASTIC CONTROL

OUR church of Grasmere was not left to the control of parson and manorial lord like other tithe-yielding parishes, it was snapped up by a big monastery. The abbeys that had sprung up all over England in post-Norman times were of a very different order from the simple religious communities of Anglo-Saxon times ; and before long it became a question as to how they were to be maintained on the splendid lines of their foundation. By the reign of Henry I. they had begun to appropriate rectories, and in 1212 the parish church of Crosthwaite was given over to the control of Fountains Abbey in Yorkshire, which carried off all the profits of the tithes, merely restoring £5 a year to the rector, who was elected by its chapter.* St. Mary's Abbey had been founded in York city in 1088, and its chapter found it necessary by the end of the thirteenth century to look round the great church province of Richmondshire to see if there were no revenues which might by royal favour be appropriated.

In December, 1301, Edward I. despatched a writ to the sheriff of Westmorland, bidding him inquire of true and lawful men whether it would be to the damage of the Crown or others if the abbey of St. Mary of York were allowed to appropriate the church of Kirkeby in Kendale with its chapels and appurtenances.

The inquisition was held, be it noted, not at Kendal but at Appleby, where a sworn jury declared the appropriation would damage no one. An explicit statement was added which concerns us. " The chapels of the said

* *Victoria History of Cumberland.*

church, to wit the chapels of Gresmer and Winandermere are in the patronage of Lord Ingram de Gynes and Christian his wife, by reason of the inheritance of the said Christian, and they hold of the king in chief . . . . And the chapel of Gresmer is worth yearly 20 li." *

Accordingly a license was granted by Edward I., under date February 23rd, 1302, for the Abbot and Convent of St. Mary's, York, "towards the relief of their impoverished condition," to appropriate the "church of Kirkeby in Kendale, which is of their own patronage, in the diocese of York, and consists of two portions, on condition that they appropriate none of its chapels, if there are any." †

The appropriation took effect; and moreover the Abbey succeeded in gaining jurisdiction over the "chapels" of Windermere and Grasmere. The nomination of the rector indeed remained in the hands of the lord of the Fee, but it was passed on to the chapter of the Abbey for confirmation, before being finally ratified by the Archdeacon of Richmondshire. Thus three august authorities had to bestir themselves, when a fresh parson was needed for our parish; and in 1349 King Edward III., the Abbot of St. Mary and Archdeacon Henry de Walton were all concerned in the business.‡ No doubt the monks seized the right to nominate whenever they could, and in 1439 George Plompton was named by them before his admission by the archdeacon.§

This change was not put into effect, however, without fierce opposition in the district. In 1309 an appeal went up to the king from the Abbot of St. Mary, who styled himself "parson of the church of Kirkeby in Kendale," wherein he stated that when his servants had gone to carry in the tithe corn and hay, they had been assaulted

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* *Inq. ad quod damnum*, 38/6.
† *Calendar Patent Rolls*, 30 Edw. I.
‡ *Calendar Patent Rolls*.
§ *Calendar Patent Rolls*, 17 Hen. VI., p. 1.

by Walter de Strykeland and others ; and moreover that Roger, the vicar and the other chaplains and clerks appointed to celebrate divine service in that church, hindered them in the discharge of the same, trampled down and consumed his corn and hay, and took away the horses from his waggons and impounded them. Whereupon three justices were appointed to adjudicate upon the case.*

From this it would be seen that the local clergy were as bitterly opposed to the monastic rule as the gentry and the people. Sir Walter de Strickland with armed servants at his command headed the opposition. His lands at Sizergh lay to the south of the town of Kendal and he refused to the men of the monastery right of way across them for the collection of the tithes of corn, which was always made while the stooks stood upright in the field. After much wrangling, for no abbot was ever known to withdraw a claim, articles of agreement were made out between them, which reiterated the statement that the church of Kirkby Kendal was " canonically possessed in proper use " by the monastery.† However, the convent found it easier to let the tithes to the opponent, rather than to wrestle with an obstructionist policy ; and in 1334 Sir Walter is found agreeing to furnish to the monastic granary now established at Kirkby Kendal three good measures of oatmeal for the tithe of the sheaves of Sigredhergh, sold to him by the abbot and convent.‡

But the people were not appeased, and when in 1344 the archbishop made a visitation, opportunity was taken to lay before him, in the name of " the common right," complaints against the monopoly of funds by the convent, as the following document shows :—

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* *Calendar Patent Rolls.*
† Sizergh Castle MSS.
‡ MS. Dodsworth 28, fol. 78.

Release of the Abbot and Convent of the Monastery of St. Mary, York, concerning their churches, pensions, and portions.

In the name of God, Amen, Since we, William, by divine permission Archbishop of York, ... in our progress of visitation which we have lately performed in and of our diocese . . . . have found that the religious men the Abbot and Convent of the monastery of St. Mary, against the common right detain the parish churches and chapels, portions, pensions, and parochial tithes underwritten, namely, ... the annual pensions in the parts of Richmond : of the church of Richmond 100s. and 20 lbs of wax, ... of the vicarage of Kirkby Kendall £4, of the churches of Gresmere and Winandermers 5 marks . . . . We have commanded the said abbot and convent . . . . to show their rights and titles before us and have caused them to be called, ... and we . . . . having considered the rights and good faith of the said religious men . . . . release the said abbot and convent . . . . as canonical possessors of the said churches, chapels, portions, pensions (&c) . . . . Dated at Cawood, on the 20th day of the month of August in the year of our Lord MCCCXLIIIJ, and in the third year of our pontificate.*

The appeal had been made in vain. Yet opposition could not have ceased, as the case was finally carried to Rome. In 1396 a confirmation of the abbey's possessions (including the chapels of Gresmere and Wynandremere, worth 5 marks each) was made by the Pope, on petition by the abbey, according to letters patent of Thomas Arundel, late archbishop of York, dated November, 1392.*

* *Calendar of Papal Registers*, vol. v., p. 1-4.

THE CLERGY

THOUGH not successful, Sir Walter de Strickland's opposition had done some good, but for exactly 200 years longer did the monastery by the walls of the city of York hold sway over the church of Grasmere. In what degree its influence was felt in the mountain parish cannot be told, or what it gave in return for the pension it abstracted. It may have assisted in the rebuilding of the edifice, lending aid by monastic skill in architecture. Probably it supervised the worship in the church, and improved the ritual, passing on to the village priest the tradition of its own richly furnished sanctuary. Signs were not wanting at the Reformation that the district had been ecclesiastically well served.

It has been seen that the parson of the parish was a pluralist and a non-resident as early as 1254 ; and so were those of his successors of whom we have evidence. The glimpses obtained through scant record disclose the tithe-taking rector of the valley as a figure distinguished by education, if not by family, and known to the lofty in station. He is termed " Master," and bears the suffix " clerk " ; while " Sir " is reserved for the curate, his deputy, who has not graduated at either university.* He was skilled in law more than in theology. He may have served an apprenticeship in the great office of the Chancery ; sometimes men of his position are termed " king's clerk." † He was not an idle man, and was often em-

* Dr. Cox, *Parish Registers of England*, p. 251.

† In 1383 Richard de Clifford, " king's clerk " was presented to the church of Warton in Kendale, *Calendar Patent Rolls.*

ployed in secular business by the lord of the Fee. It may have been in the collection of the lady's dues—for the heiress Christiana de Lindesay, had married Ingelram de Gynes, of Coucy in France, in 1283—that the parson of Grasmere suffered an assault (1290) at Leghton Gynes (later Leighton Conyers). It is certain that when Robert de Gynes, one of the sons of Christiana, and possessed of some of her lands about Casterton and Levens, went "beyond the seas" in 1334, he empowered Oliver de Welle, parson of Grasmere, to act with Thomas de Bethum as his attorney. Oliver de Welle had a footing in our valleys besides his parsonage, for he is stated to have held, under the lord William de Coucy, deceased, "a certain place called Little Langedon in Stirkland Ketle," which was then (1352) in the custody of the executor of his will, John de Crofte.*

Edmund de Ursewyk, "king's clerk," whom the king nominated to Grasmere in 1349—the young lord William de Coucy being dead—doubtless came of a Furness family, and may have been related to Adam de Ursewyk who held land for his life in the barony, by grant of the elder William,† as well as the office of chief forester of the park at Troutbeck.‡

"Magister George Plompton" was another learned cleric of good family, being the son of Sir William Plumpton of Plumpton, knight. He was a bachelor-at-law, and was ordained sub-deacon in 1417. It was in 1438–9 that he was nominated to the rectory of Grasmere, by the Chapter of St. Mary's, and some years after he acquired that of Bingham in Nottinghamshire. This he resigned (and doubtless Grasmere also) in two or three years' time, owing to age and infirmities. He retired to Bolton Abbey, and in 1459 obtained leave from the Archbishop of York

* MS. Rawlinson, B. 438, f. 2.
† *Calendar Patent Roll*, 20 Edw. III.
‡ *Calendar Patent Roll*, 20 Edw. III.

to have service celebrated for himself and his servants within the walls of the monastery—a permit which gives a picture of affluent peace and piety in a few words.*

Master Hugh Ashton, parson, acted as Receiver-general for the lands of the Countess of Richmond (the Lindesay Fee) in 1505–6.† On his resignation in 1511, Henry VIII. exercised his right as inheritor of the Fee, and nominated John Frost to the rectory; the abbot and convent presenting in due form. This happened again in 1525, when William Holgill was appointed.‡

Of other rectors of the post-Reformation period we know little or nothing. Richard, "clericus," was taxed in 1332 on goods worth £4, a sum higher by £1 than any land-holding parishioner in the three townships.§

LIST OF RECTORS AND CURATES

1254	Henry de Galdington. *Calendar of Papal Registers*, vol. 2, p. 294.
1290–91	William de Kendale. *De Banco Rolls*, Rev. 86 in 79d.
	Adam de Ottelay, "capellanus." Levens Rental of Ed. 2 or early Ed. 3.
1332	Richard "clericus." *Lay Subsidy Roll.* West., 195/1A.
1334	
June 24	Oliver de Welle. *Close Rolls and Patent Rolls.* 8 Ed. 3.
1349	Edmund de Ursewyk. *Patent Rolls.*
1362	Hugo de Middleton. Torre's *Archdeaconry of Richmondshire.*
Dec. 3	
1401	
Jan. 13	Walter Hoton "parson." *Patent Rolls*, Henry IV.
——	Reginald Pulham. Torre; no date given.
1443	
May 24	Peter Yrford. Torre.
1459	
Feb. 10	George Plompton. Torre. *Calendar Patent Rolls.*

* Canon Raine's Notes to *Testamenta Eboracensia*, Sur. So., vol. 30, p. 68.
† Min. Acc., Hen. VII., 877.
‡ "List of Rydall-Writings." D.F.
§ *Lay Subsidy Roll*, West, 195/1A, 6 Edw. III.

1486 James Chamer " capellano."

1505–6 Hugh Ashton, " clerk," Min. Acc., Henry VII., 877. Resigns Grasmere Rectory in 1512. Rydal Hall MSS.

1511 Oct. 18 John Frost, on resignation of Hugh Ashton. Rydal Hall MSS.

1525 Mar. 14 William Holgill or Hawgill. Rydal Hall MSS. Chester Diocesan Registry.

1548 Jan. 11 Gabriel Croft, instituted on death of Holgill. Chester Registry. Called Rector at Visitation of Bishop of Chester, 1554, when the following names accompany his.

Dns William Jackson. His will was proved Jan. 21, 1569, which calls him " late curat of Gresmer."

Dns John Hunter.

Dns Hugo Walton. Hugh Watson " preist " bur. March 8, 1577. Grasmere Church Register.

1563 " Sirre Thomas Benson, curate " witnesses will of John Benson Esq. of Baisbrowne.

1569 ? Master John Benson, rector.

? Lancelot Levens. Chester Diocesan Registry.

1575* July 18 John Wilson, instituted on death of Lan. Levens. Chester Diocesan Registry. Bur. May, 13, 1627. Grasmere Church Register.

1627 July 16 Robertus Hogge. Removed following year. Rydal Hall MSS.

1628 May 24 Henry Wilson, B.A., instituted, according to Chester Diocesan Registry, on death of John Wilson, by presentation of Agneta Fleming. Ejected 1644. Died 1647.

CLERGY DOING DUTY DURING THE COMMONWEALTH

1645. " Mr. Benson."

1646. " Sir Christopher Rawling." Probably had served as Curate for some time previously. The Register gives the baptism of his child in 1641 when he is called " Clericus." He likewise joined Parson Wilson in a bill in 1642.

* 1575—March 20. James Dugdall, " Clericus " witnesses Indenture between Wil. Fleming of Rydal and his miller.

1653. John Wallas. Independent. Ejected 1655.
1655 John Tompson. Probably Presbtyerian.

RECTORS AFTER RESTORATION

1660. John Ambrose. Probably nominated on death of Henry Wilson, but not allowed to serve.
1684 Henry Fleming, B.A. on death of J. Ambrose.
1728 William Kilner on death of H. Fleming.
1728 George Fleming, LL.D. (Dean of Carlisle) on session of W. Kilner.
1733 William Fleming, M.A. on resignation of Geo. Fleming.
1743 John Craik, B.A. on death of W. Fleming.
1806 Thomas Jackson on death of J. Craik.
1822 Sir Richard Fleming, Bart., on death of T. Jackson.

CURATES

The curates who officiated under the rectors were a different class of men. Constantly resident, and seemingly holding the post for life, they belonged as a rule to the district—even it might be, to the township—as did William Jackson, who died 1569. A sharp boy, son of a statesman, might attract the notice of the parson, or of the visiting brother from St. Mary's Abbey. After serving an apprenticeship, as attendant or acolyte within the church, he might be passed on from the curate's tuition—for the latter almost always taught school—to Kendal or even to the abbey at York. On being admitted into the order of priesthood, he would return to his native place (should the post be vacant) and minister week by week to the spiritual needs of his fellows and his kinsfolk. Sometimes he even took up land to farm. Adam de Ottelay, " chaplain," is set down in an undated rental of the early fourteenth century, as joining in tenure with John " del bancke." *

* Levens Hall MS.

The " chaplain " James Chamer, who witnessed a Grasmere deed in 1486, was probably the curate there.* It must be remembered, however, that the three townships appear to have been, from an early (but unknown) date, furnished with resident curates, acting under rector and abbot. Little Langdale too, if tradition be correct, had its religious needs supplied by a chapel. It is possible, indeed, that this may have been served through the priory of Conishead in Furness, to which William de Lancaster III.—the last baron to rule Kendal as a whole, who died 1246—granted a settlement or grange at Baisbrowne and Elterwater, which was later called a manor. This grange lay within Grasmere parish, as does the field below Bield, where tradition asserts the chapel to have stood. The first express mention of a chapel at Ambleside (within the township of Rydal and Loughrigg) is found in a document of Mr. G. Browne, dated 1584. But in the rental of 1505–6, William Wall, " chaplain," is entered as holding in Ambleside one third of the " pasture of Brigges." There is little doubt, therefore, that he was resident in the town, and uniting husbandry with his clerical office. Of a chapel in Great or Mickle Langdale the first evidence that occurs (after the strong presumptive evidence of the four priests serving the parish to be given immediately) is the indenture of 1571, which expressly mentions it.

The Start of the Reformation

The revolution which Henry VIII. brought about in the ecclesiastical world of England shook our parish, as the rest of England. Not content with the suppression and spoliation of the lesser monasteries, he turned to the greater ones, whose riches in gold and jewels, in land and revenue, excited his cupidity. Remote Grasmere even,

* Rydal Hall MS.

by diversion of the pension she had dutifully paid her church superior, might supply something to the royal pocket! So the new supreme Head of the Church is found in 1543, bartering what he could to two of those job-brokers of ecclesiastical property, who were so evil a feature of the Reformation. The parchment at Rydal Hall runs thus :—

A Breuiate of the Kings Grant of Gersmire
Advowson to Bell & Broksbye in 35^to Hen. 8

Be it remembered that in the charter of our most illustrious lord Henry the Eight, by the grace of God king of England, France, and Ireland, defender of the faith, and on earth supreme head of the English and Irish church, made to John Bell and Robert Brokelsby within named, among other things it is thus contained :—

The king to all to whom, &c. greeting. We do also give, for the consideration aforesaid, and of our certain knowledge and mere motion for us, our heirs and successors, do grant to the aforesaid John Bell and Robert Brokelsbye, the advowson, donation, denomination, presentation, free disposition, and right of patronage of the Rectory of Gresmere in our county of Westmorland, which, as parcel of the possessions and revenues of the late Monastery of St. Mary near the wall of the City of York, or otherwise or in any other manner or by any reason whatsoever, has or have fallen, or may fall, into our hands. Witness the king at Walden the twenty-first day of October in the thirty-fifth year of our reign.

This is clearly a copy of but a part of the original charter, and the "consideration" which Henry received does not transpire; but in the following month the two speculators procured a licence to sell again, and they passed over their purchase of the Grasmere advowson, and of all woods upon the premises—meaning no doubt the old demesne of the Lindesay Fee—to Alan Bellingham, gent., for £30 11s. 5½d.* Bellingham in the same year

* "List of Rydall-Writings," by D.F., in which he writes the names as Bellowe and Brokylsbee.

purchased direct from the Crown that portion of Grasmere known as the Lumley Fee—thus gaining the lordship of some part of the valley.

Henry's sale of the advowson did not touch the tithes, which were left in the hands of the rector; but he reserved for himself the "pension" of 2½ marks which had been regularly paid out of them to the abbey. It passed down with other Crown property to Charles II., and in his reign was sold, according to an Act of Parliament which was passed permitting the sale of such royal proceeds. Since that time it has been in private hands, and bought and sold in the money market like stocks. It may perhaps be traced by sundry entries in account books, as paid by the tithe-holder in 1645, "for a pension for Gresmire due at Mich: last" £1 13s. 4d. It was paid in 1729 by Dr. Fleming as "Fee-farm Rent" to the Marquis of Caermarthen; and later by Mr. Cralke to the Duke of Leeds; while Sir William Fleming, as owner of the tithes of Windermere, paid the same from them.* It is still paid through a London agent, being officially set down as "Net Rent for Grasmere, £2 6. 8d.; Land tax, 6s. 8d." This sum represents—not five marks—but five nobles, or half-marks. Thus it may be said that the dead hand of Henry VIII. still controls the tithes of Grasmere.

This tyrant wrought other changes for Grasmere. When creating the new diocese of Chester, he swept our parts of Westmorland within it. The archdeaconry of Richmondshire remained, but the archdeacon was shorn of power. He no longer instituted our parson, as in the days prior to the rule of St. Mary's Abbey, and this empty form fell to the Bishop of Chester; who, on the death of parson Hodgill in 1548†, appointed to the office one Gabriel Cowdr, upon nomination by the patron.*

* Bryhal Hall MSS. and Tax Books P. Nicholas.
† Chester Diocesan Register.

Now Croft was seemingly a man of unscrupulous temper. The boy Edward was by this time upon the throne, and spoliation of church revenues was, under his advisers and in the name of Protestantism, the order of the day. The parson of Grasmere was one of those who seized the opportunity offered by the general misrule; and he committed an act for which there could be no legal pretext. Previous rectors had drawn the tithes of the parish, and pocketed the large margin that remained after the stipends of the worthy curates who did their work had been paid. But Croft went beyond this. In 1549 he sold the tithes on a lease, and not for the period of his life (which he might have claimed as his right) but for ninety-seven years. The purchaser was his patron, Dame Marion Bellingham of Helsington, widow; and she paid him a lump sum of £58 12s. 5½d., upon the agreement that she and her heirs would furnish from the tithes a stipend for the rector of £18 11s. 7d.*

The bargain, ratified by John, Bishop of Chester, was excellent for both parties; but it was disastrous for the parish. So far, the tithes, however mismanaged, had lain in the hands of the church and the clergy, for whose support they were rendered. The Abbey of St. Mary, while exacting a pension from them, exercised in return a supervision that was doubtless of benefit; for under it, the rector—though he took the bulk of them himself—could hardly escape providing the three priests resident within the parish with sufficient stipends. Moreover, as he was an absentee, it is probable that he made a stable arrangement for their ingetting, that would be convenient to himself and comfortable for the parishioners (such as obtained later), and that he even farmed them to the dalesmen themselves. This method saved him the risks of an annual tithing carried out by a paid agent, and it

* List of Rydall Writings. D.F.

insured him a regular (if more moderate) income, in easily transported silver money. The evidence of the lawsuits shows that the system of paying a certain fixed sum instead of the tenth in kind was actually in force for some commodities, while in some cases this composition or prescription extended to the whole of a landed estate.

The change was sharp, from church control to control by a lay impropriator, whose simple business it was to squeeze as large an income as he could out of his investment. He was not likely to leave the tithing on the old easy footing, nor was the parishioner inclined to increase his offering without resistance. Squire William Fleming was a big enough man to front on his own account the common foe. Averring that, in satisfaction of all tithes the customary annual sum of 20s. had been paid for "the demeanes of Rydall," he refused Alan Bellingham's demand for a tenth of hay, wool and lambs taken from the yearly yield. Alan, who denied the custom, sued him in the Consistory Court at York, including in his claim the proceeds of the years 1569 to 1572, for which payment had been made. The spiritual court judged in his favour; whereupon Fleming carried the case to the civil court of King's Bench. Here, after several adjournments, and a trial before justices connected with the county, the final verdict was given in his favour (1575).*

Before the case was settled, the contenders struck a bargain, and the ownership of the advowson of Grasmere passed from Alan Bellingham of Fawcet Forrest, executor of Marion Bellingham, to the Rydal squire for the sum of £100, and that of the remainder of the lease of the rectory and tithes for £500.† The tenfold increase of the purchase money in twenty-four years time shows the enormous increase in tithe value when in the grasp of lay hands;

* *Coram Rege Roll*, N.T., 17 Eliz., ro. 218.

† Dated Nov. 3, 1573. "List of Rydall Writings."

for a rise of agricultural prosperity would not account for it. Squire William now became in his turn the oppressor; but the tale of the powerful opposition he roused in the parish must be left to another chapter. The advowson remains yet in his family.

To return to the parsons. Croft, with an annuity assured to him, and a small capital in gold, no doubt troubled himself little about his parish. He had defrauded it and crippled its funds for the next hundred years. The curates we suppose stuck to their posts, though where their stipends came from is a problem. Little change in ritual could have been made, before Edward's death and Mary's accession brought a reinstitution of the old form of faith, as well as a hopeless attempt to restore stolen church property. In 1554 the Bishop of Chester held a visitation at Kendal for these parts, and the officials of the parish are set down in the following list :—*

Gresmer. Mr. Gabriel Croft, Rector ibm. pt
Dns Willmus Jackson, pt. xh.
Dns Johes Hunter pt.
Dns Hugo Walton pt.

pt. Johes Benson
pt. Georgius Mylforth } Guardiani
pt. Edwardus Benson

pt. Rogerus Gregg
pt. Nicolaus Dicson
Thoas Gregg } Inquisitores
pt. Hugo Gregg

It is clear from this that three curates then served the parish—"Dominus" being the latinized "sir" of the customary title. Of the third in the list evidence is found in the parish register, where the burial is recorded on

* Chester Diocesan Registry.

March 8th, 1577, of " Hugh Watson preist," this no doubt being the correct form of his name. It seems likely that he officiated in Ambleside, which by this time was a thriving little town. Of John Hunter nothing further is known : he may have served the chapel in Langdale.

Record of William Jackson is found in his will :—*

Sir William Jackson *late curet at Gresmer.*

Jan. 21, 1569. I William Jackson clarke and curat of Grysmer—to be buriede within ye parishe church of Grysmer, near where my IJ brothers was buried—To my parishe church VIs. VIIId. And yt to be payd . . . . Kendaill for a booke at I bought of (erased) to the betering of the . . . . To the poor folkes XXXs. to be divided at the sytct of my supervisores. Item I give to every on of my god children, VId.—To every sarvent in my maister's house XIId. Item I geve to Sir Thomas Benson a sernet typet. To my Mr. John Benson a new velvet cap—By me Sir William Jaikson at Grysmer.

Inventory, 21 Jan. 1569.—Rament unbequested to be sold be my executores and supervisores. A worsate jaccate, a brod cloth jacate, a brod clothe side goune, a mellay side goune, a shorte goune, a preiste bonate, a velvate cape, a sylke hate, II. pare of hosse, a mellay casseck, a worsat typat, a matras, a great chiste, a ledder dublat. Summa, III li. XIIs . . . . In wax and sergges, books and parchment, with other small thyngs to be sold within my chamber. I owe to Christofor Wolker's wyff Under Helme XIIs. of newe money to be payed to hyr, whych she dyd bowrere for me in my tyme of nede.

The following extract from the Kendal Corporation MSS. may not be inappropriate here :—

MSS. of the Corporation of Kendal.
This MS. commences 10th Report.

Sept. 26, 1653. Prov. at election of a Mayor. Order that every Alderman shall provide *a gowne* for the following Sunday, or be fined 40s. *Gowns* according to an ancient order, to be all

* Wills and Inventories of the Archdeaconry of Richmondshire. Surtees Society.

of one form " of blacke stuffe, to be faced with black plush or velvet, *and Mr. Maior himselfe to have one readie* against Sunday next or else forfeit 40s."

(A 13). " Abstract of fines of Leete Courte," Oct. 20, 1612. Various penalties for misdemeanours.

" Abstracte of Fines for the Bilawes Courte," Dec. 14, 1612. Various injunctions and fines.

" *Offerings and bridehowes* allowed by Mr. Alderman " (then head of Corporation) and 4 Burgesses and the Vicar then being. Bidden dinners or " nutcastes, or *merie nightes* " for money not to exceed 12 persons. Same for " *churching dinner* " for monie taking, only 12 wives allowed.

From this will something may be gathered of the life of the village priest who belongs to the vale, and whose simple wish is to be buried by his two brothers within the church. He has his appointed chamber in his master's house—doubtless the rectory. His possessions are few. There are some books, also parchment and wax, for the making of wills and indentures ; there is the mattress on which he slept, and a great " chiste," in which no doubt papers and clothes were stored together. Of clothes he had a goodly stock, in jackets, gowns, tippets, caps, and the stout leather doublet which no doubt he donned for his long tramps through storm and rain and snow to the dying. The sale of all these was to furnish money for his legacies—for coin he had none. His benefactions are characteristic : loyally to his parish church a noble, or half a mark ; to every servant of his master 12d. ; to each of his godchildren 6d. ; and he desires besides that an old debt, incurred in his " tyme of nede," should be paid in new money. Some crisis is suggested here, when the good wife of Under Helm collected money for him.

But other facts may be gathered from this will. Our good curate bequeaths to " Sir Thomas Benson " his sarsnet tippet, clearly from its superior stuff, the best that he had. This, the usual outer dress of the priest, was a

long garment made with sleeves, reaching to the ankles, and was tied with a girdle.* Now a Thomas Benson, "curate," witnessed the will of John Benson of Baisbrowne in 1563; he must then have served the chapel of Langdale for a series of years. Also it seems probable that the curate's master, John Benson, was the rector, succeeding Croft or another.

A spirit of peace and goodwill breathes through this document, and one too that suggests continuity in the order of the church. Yet it must be remembered that it was written in the reign of Elizabeth, when the Protestant religion had been firmly established by law, and written moreover by a man who had undoubtedly followed the Catholic ritual fifteen years before. His fellow curate too of that date, "preist" Watson, was still alive, surviving him by eight years. There is a Protestant odour about the cassock, and Jackson possessed one; but his wardrobe is distinctly of the old-world, priestly type. It is probable indeed that there was little change made for some time even in the services of the church. The people of the north-western mountains were conservative, and it was they who most stoutly resisted the suppression of the monasteries. There is evidence to show that the new tenets were but slowly adopted in these parts. The church at Crosthwaite was found as late as 1571 to be still in possession of the furniture and pictures that had lent a touch of splendour to the former ritual; and they were then most stringently ordered to be destroyed.†

The people were not likely to welcome changes that brought in their train not only impoverishment of service, but reduction in the number of the clergy; for with the diversion of the tithes, there ceased to be any provision for the salaries of curates.

Langdale did without a curate, and not until over 200

* Wall's *Old English Parish.*
† *Victorian History of Cumberland.*

years was the township once more blessed with a resident minister, though the chapel was used for services. Ambleside was in different case. Now a thriving little town, equally distant from the two parish churches that claimed it, with fulling mills bringing in wealth, it was able to maintain a curate independently, and did so.

James Dugdale the cleric, who witnessed a Rydal deed in 1575, might have been supposed to serve at Ambleside, only that Priest Watson was then alive. Certain it is that in 1584 the townsfolk placed their support of chapel and curate on a solid basis, pledging each man his portion of land thereto. This was immediately before the appointment of John Bell as curate. The pledge was repeated in a deed of the year 1597.

The rector of the parish, with no more than £18 odd as stipend, had now to perform the entire duty of the wide parish. Nothing is known of Croft's later dealings with the rectorate, nor of Lancelot Levens, who followed him. But on the latter's death in 1575, John Wilson was instituted, and for fifty-two years he served as rector. From his handwriting, seen in the market-deed, and from the register (most negligently kept during his time of office) an unfavourable impression is created. When he died in 1627, there followed—after a few months interlude, when Robert Hogge served—the Rev. Henry Wilson, B.A., who was to become notorious as a Royalist and High-Churchman. He was nominated by Dame Agnes Fleming, the clever widow of Squire William, who at this time ruled at Rydal Hall for her son John.

The expenses of the tithe gathering were not great. An item of 2s. 0d. is paid to David Harrison, the Rydal innkeeper, against "tythinge," and "for gathering tith Eggs" 1s. 0d. These last offerings were paid in kind, and we know from subsequent accounts that this persuasive office was somtimes filled by women, " two wiues," being paid in 1643 " for goeing 3 dayes gathering Eggs at Easter."

The later account-sheets kept by Richard Harrison show less completely than Tyson's the income derived from the tithes.

	li	s	d
Rec. in pt. of Lambe booke of gresmire at seaverall tymes due before this 23 June 1643 due at Easter last	11	6	0
Rec. more in pt. of lambe booke, for gresmire that was begun at Easter last. Rec. this 10 Aug. ..	3	1	10

The tithes on lambs amounted therefore in 1643 to £14. 7s. 10d. Next year:—

	li	s	d
Rec. more at before this 16 Julie 1644 in pt. of Easter Reckinings of Gresmire due at Easter last ..	7	1	9
Rec. more in pt. of Lambe booke then due	11	12	6
Rec. for Easter Reckininges Lambe silvr and some arreares due before this 26 Julie 1645 for gresmire	35	12	0
Rec. of Easter booke & Lambe booke due at Easter 1646 for gresmire before this 4 Ap. 1646 ..	30	2	6

We have no entries discriminating between tithe and demesne wool, which was now selling at a high price; nor do we hear of the tithe corn, except that in 1643 the sum of 10s. 0d. was paid for the hire of a barn for it. In Tyson's accounts the even money received for it—as well as other entries which connect its payment with the holder of Padmire in Grasmere—give an appearance of it having been then farmed, as it was at a later time.

THE CIVIL WARS

IT is clear that the tithes were dropping in value; and this is little to be wondered at when the condition of the country is considered.

War was rife, and the "troubles" that affected every household—high and low, either in actual fighting or in tax-paying—were felt with peculiar poignancy at Rydal Hall. Squire John Fleming, as a rich man, had not stooped to conceal his religion, and had cheerfully paid his fine of £50 a year as a Catholic of the old faith. He died on February 27, 1643, at an unfortunate time for his young children, when warfare was just beginning in the north-west. He was buried the same evening, like many another recusant, in Grasmere Church; and though Parson Henry Wilson was paid a fee for "ouersight of his buriall" it is possible that mass was first said over the body in the "Chapel" chamber at Rydal; for one Salomon Benson, a mysterious member of the group of papists gathered about the Squire, in receipt of a pension of five marks a year, was probably a priest.

The orphaned children—two girls growing to womanhood and a younger boy—were now left with all the wealth that would be eventually theirs, in charge of executors. Chief among these was Richard Harrison, a nephew of the Squire, and a Roman Catholic. He appears to have lived with his wife and son at Rydal Hall, and to have had entire management of the household in the years that followed.

The position was a difficult one, and naturally grew more so as time went on, and success began to attend the

Parliamentary party. The money-coffers of Squire John were freely dipped into for loans to support the Royal cause, which the young heir joined in person ; and the house was the resort of Royalist soldiers and gentlemen of the neighbourhood. As a consequence, it was peculiarly obnoxious to the supporters of the Parliament, and was likewise detested by the Puritans as a hotbed of Papists. Therefore, when the houses of Royalists were sacked up and down the county, there was little probability that it would escape.

A tradition has always existed that Rydal Hall was entered and plundered by the soldiers of the Commonwealth ; but it is in the account-sheets of Richard Harrison that explicit evidence of the fact has now, and for the first time, been found. The catastrophe would belong wholly to Rydal history, but for a clause in the accounts which concerns Grasmere church.

Dates are difficult to follow in the sheets, but it is clear that the year 1644 marked the turning-point of the war. The hopes of the Royalists had been high when Prince Rupert marched through Lancashire to meet the enemy ; but they were crushed by the terrible defeat of Marston Moor on July 1st. The king's forces in these parts were completely scattered, and there was a tremendous exodus of loyalists, who left to join the king's army in the south. The band was led by Sir Francis Howard, and it included the young heir of Rydal. The exodus is marked in the account-sheets by the numerous sums borrowed from the Rydal chests by various people, beginning with the chief himself. Even the loyal parsons borrowed, and small sums were lent about this time to two of the Cumberland curates, who possibly went off on king's business too. Henry Wilson, the rector of Grasmere, was a noted Royalist, and apparently acted as an emissary in the cause. The following entry records one of the many loans to him, at a time when he too was leaving the country :—

	li	s	d
Lent parson wilson upon his note by & with the consent of Mr. Phillipson & Mr. Willm. wch. makes that he hath lately lent 8 li wch. he will either repay or els giue satisfaction that it may allow when he comes & serues the cure at Gressmire Church lent him this the 13 July	5	10	0

It is clear that in this year, 1644, the hall and its inmates shared in the general sufferings. Friendly messengers rode by night to give warning when another hall was sacked. Hostile soldiers were quartered on the premises, and some pillaging of horses and other things was done, for which Harrison tried to obtain restitution. He also sought protection—if it might be granted by wire-pulling and bribery—from Colonels Bellingham and Briggs, who commanded the Scots troops in Westmorland. It is possible that the new glass required both for the hall and for the choir of Grasmere church, "which was broken," may have been the result of some hostile demonstration.

But the actual raid upon the hall was made at Eastertide, 1645. The soldiers of " Captaine Orfer & Collonell Lawson " entered it, searched for money and took all they could find (which was little) and carried off Richard Harrison to prison, where he remained till Pentecost.

Further mischief is recorded in another paragraph of the sheets, when the sum of £2 4s. 8d. is set down at Easter, 1645, as " pd. for bread and wine twice at Gresmire Church in regard it was once plundered by Lawson's souldiers."

Now this provision for the Easter communion, which the tithe-holder was bound to make, was a special provision, always accounted for separately, and probably delivered direct to the church from the wine merchant, whose name is occasionally mentioned. So in this case, the church itself was presumably entered with violence, and by the same troop that visited Rydal Hall.

It was a Cumberland troop that did the mischief, as is evident from the names of the officers. Colonel Wilfred Lawson of the Isell family was an ardent fighter for the Parliament. Captain Orfeur was doubtless a member of the stock of Plumbland Hall.*

The troop may have marched from the siege of Carlisle Castle, which had been held for the king through the winter; and nothing is more likely than that, on their march over the Raise, they would halt at Grasmere, and do what despite they could to a sacred building held by an episcopalian parson and a recusant patron, who were of course odious for their so-called "delinquency." The event, however, is inferred rather than actually stated in Harrison's account.†

At Whitsuntide, on his release from prison, Richard Harrison returned to his post at Rydal Hall as factotum and financier. The position became steadily worse. Young William Fleming had returned from Bristol, after reverses in the south, only to be captured and imprisoned in Kendal; and his freedom had to be procured by a heavy ransom. In restless mood he declared his intention of going overseas, and considerable sums were paid for his fitting out; but he never got beyond London, where he died shortly after of smallpox. The Parliamentary Committee, then sitting at Kendal, exacted heavy fines from the estate for delinquency. Oppressive taxes too were repeatedly levied for the support of the Parliamentary forces and the Scotch army. This extraordinary outflow of money, as well as the loans made to friends, must have materially reduced the wealth of Squire John, and have

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* He may have been one of the brothers of William, head of the family, who died in 1660. See "The Orfeurs of High Close," *Transactions* Cumberland and Westmorland Antiquarian Society, vol. iii.

† It is necessary to be explicit on this point, for, on the authority of the writer's MS., a statement that the church of Grasmere was broken into by the Parliamentary forces appeared twice in print in 1910, without any reference being given to the actual source of information, or its ambiguity.

left less for the suitors who presently appeared to claim the hands of the heiresses.

Not the Rydal estate alone, but the whole country-side groaned under the burden of taxation. It is therefore not surprising that from the hardness of the times, as well as from possible illwill, the tithes began to yield an uncertain return ; and that to come by them at all it was sometimes necessary to engage a strong man or a stout party for the business. An item in the account-sheets for 1645 runs :—

	li	s	d
spent in 3 dayes when we went to gather the tith woole being ten in company	1	4	0
Spent more when Mr. Mason & I went to gather the Easter dues at severall tymes		15	0
Oct. Adam Fisher & young Jarrat for Inning the tith corne at Gresmere this yeare 1645	1	0	0

Adam Fisher was the Rydal blacksmith, and doubtless a strong man. Clearly no farmer could be found to take up a contract for the tithes of corn ; and as we have seen, a barn had been hired for its housing.

In 1648 Harrison went into Cumberland, and spent a week getting the " tith-rents " due on St. Mark's Day ; and he enters :—

	li	s	d
geaven my cosen Lamplougs man for his paynes in comeinge to meete me there with directions from [parliamentary] comittee to pay there rents unto me, otherwise I had gotten none payd	0	5	0

Harrison was subjected to another imprisonment, and squeezed by the hostile government of many further sums. His account-sheets close in 1648–9, when the hall—soon to lie under the ban of sequestration—was itself closed.

THE COMMONWEALTH

THE year 1645 marked the beginning of a great change in the church government of Grasmere. Already the new system devised by the Presbyterian party (which was now in the ascendant after the success of the Scotch at Newcastle) was being put into force as a substitute for episcopal rule. The division of the country into sections, each called a *classis*—to be administered by a committee of laymen empowered to nominate for each parish a minister and four elders—was very rapidly carried out. The following answer was sent to the Parliament's demand, by letter from the Speaker, that *classes* for South Westmorland should be formed :—*

Honourable Sir

We received your Honours letter (dated the 22nd September last) the 3d of February last Wherein is required of us with advise of Godly Ministers, to returne to your Honour such Ministers and Elders as are thought fitt for the Presbiteriall way of Government (which wee much desire to be established) and the several classes. After wee received your Honours letter to that purpose (though long after the date) wee speedily had a meeting ; and upon due consideration nominated the Ministers and Elders which wee thought fitted (as your Honour may conceive by this enclosed) for the Presbiteriall imployment as is desired and have divided the County of Westmerland into two Classes. Since the expediting of this your Honours direction : Wee have heard of an Ordinance of Parliament directing to the election of such persons : But as yet neither Order or Ordinance hath come unto us ; Only your Honours letter, is our Warrant and Instruction ;

* Shaw, in his *Church under the Commonwealth*, says that the scheme was already working in Northumberland and Durham at the close of 1645, and that it seems to have been put in force in Westmorland early in 1646. This letter explains the delay.

And accordingly we make bould to send (here inclosed) the names both of Ministers and Elders. And if we faile in the Parliaments method in this particuler, Wee shall willingly (upon your Honours next direction) rectify any mistake for the present, and shalbe willing to submitt to your Honours and Parliamentary directions ; Which wee shall duly expect, that in wharsoever wee haved missed, wee may amend it. Thus with our Service recommended Wee remaine

Yours Honours Servants

Ric Prissoe, Maior	Edmond Grey
Thomas Gleddall	Rich Branthwait
Ger Benson	Allan Gilpin
Rowland Dawson	Thom Sandes
	John Archer

Kendall 10 Martii, 1645

(Endorsement) 10 Martii, 1645 (1645/46). From the Maior and Committee at Kendal with their Classes.

For the Honourable William Lenthall, Esq., Speaker of the Commons House of Parliament. These—*

In the list of the parishes with their church officials which accompany this servile epistle, ours appears thus :

Grasmere

Mr. Henry Wilson, minister of Gressmer a notorious malignant and articled against at Parliament.

Elders.

Mr. Thomas Brathwait	Edward Knotts and
Michaell Benson	Francis Benson

The newly-elected elders were men of good position and character. Mr. Brathwaite, son of Gawen, and grandson of James, was soon to become the head of the Ambleside Hall family. The Bensons were the descendants of the rich clothiers of Elizabeth's days. Francis, living at his freehold of the Fold, Loughrigg, was later to display his indomitable will as a disciple of George Fox. Edward Knott was one of a race of Grasmere statesmen whose

* MSS. Tanner, 60, fol. 527, Bodleian Library, Oxford.

course was a forward one for some hundreds of years, and whose later history belongs to Rydal and Coniston.

But before these men were chosen, or this letter written, the "Committee" in Kendal had already interfered in church matters in Grasmere, and had suspended the parson. The Rev. Henry Wilson had served the king's cause in other ways than by preaching; and it is probable that the sums of money he began to borrow from 1643 from the Rydal Hall estate (whose coffers all the needy Royalists had recourse to) were used upon journeys to and fro as an emissary, or were expended in some other way for the cause.*

	li	s	d
Lent to P'son wilson upon his bill & Sr. Chr: Rawlings 13th of August for 6 weekes or els to Allow in his wages at Martinmas	1	0	0

* * * * *

Lent to Mr. Wilson P'son of Gresmire the 16 July upon his bill to be allowed in his sty. pd. at martinmas next 1644	3	0	0

By September he had borrowed £4 more, and on December 30th, £2 10s. But the Parliamentary party had by this time determined to put a curb on the Royalist parson's excursions. There exists among the MSS. of the Corporation of Kendal, a bond, dated November 16th, 1644, entered into by him to Colonel James Bellingham, "that the said Henry Wilson shall appear and render his body into the hands of the Provost Marshall of Kendall, at the end of twenty dayes next after the date hereof, and in the mean tyme shall not travell forth of the County of Westmorland nor hold any intelligence nor send any message by word or writeing to any of that party now in armes against the parliament, but in all things demeane

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* The secret messengers who passed with despatches between the king and his army endured great perils and sometimes lost their lives.

himselfe well, and not indeavour in any wise to seduce or withdrawe the affections of any of his parishioners or others from the service of King & Parliament."

Attested by James Bellingham, Thomas Brathwaite, and Thomas Kelver.*

Under the pressure of military force he was constrained to appear before the Parliamentary tribune at Kendal; and he must have been then formally inhibited from duty; for the Rydal account-book shows:—

	li	s	d
pd to Mr. Benson who serues at Gresmire put in by the Committee & ordered to pay the stypend to him that was due to Mr. Wilson for Halfe A yeare ended at penticost last 1645	9	5	9½
pd to mr. benson by an order from the Committee for Halfe A yeares wage for serving the Cure at Gresmire ended at Martinmas last 1645	9	5	9½

It is singular that in the Committee's report of its action to the Parliament, in the letter already given, it makes no mention of Mr. Benson's supersession of the rector. It was not destined to stand however; and possibly there was opposition in the parish. For Harrison enters, under February, 1646:—

	li	s	d
pd. to Sr. Chr: Rawling in pt. of his wages for seruing the Cure of Gresmire for Halfe A yeare to end at penticost next & either to pay it again or els to stand in paymt.	5	0	0

The remaining £4 was paid on May 22nd, "by order of the Comittee." It would be interesting to know who this server of the cure was. He had been resident since at least 1641, when a child of his "Christe: Rawlinge, cler," had been baptized. He had likewise joined Parson Wilson in his bill three years earlier. His prefix "Sir," betokened him to be of the lower order of clergy, who had not graduated at either University.

* Communicated by Mr. J. A. Martindale.

Meanwhile Wilson, without stipend, was sinking under a weight of debt. A year after the death of his first wife, he had married (in 1639) Mrs. Dorothy Forrest, and he had (besides a former family) young children born in 1642 and 1643. Harrison thought it necessary now, in 1645, to obtain the consent of the young heir of Rydal, and of another executor, before lending him further sums of money :—

	li	s	d
Lent parson wilson upon his note by & with the consent of Mr. Phillipson & Mr. Willm. wch. makes that he hath lately lent 8 li wch. he will either repay or els giue satisfaction that it may allow when he comes & serues the cure at Gressmire Church lent him this the 13 July	5	10	0

Possibly he left Grasmere for a time, yet it is clear that he had hopes of recovering his position there. It is noteworthy that the curates of St. John's and St. Bride's, Cumberland, borrowed money about the same time, and probably for the king's business likewise.

Parson Wilson—for so he was still called—borrowed £2 more in April, 1646, making in all £10, and £5 more in May. This was done by consent of the executors of the late Squire John Fleming, and he gave them a bill which terminated on September 29th. He was quite incapable of meeting such a bill, and it became necessary to devise a plan for securing repayment.

Now steps upon the scene a figure destined to play for long a prominent part in Grasmere church affairs. " My Cozen Ambrose " is mentioned in Harrison's account-book as ordering an additional 15s. to be paid to parson and clerk on death of Squire John " for oversight of his buriall" and now he took more pronounced action. He was nephew of Squire John, whose sister Dorothy—his mother—had married the lord of Lowick. He had been educated for the church, and in 1629 was elected Fellow of St. John's

College, Cambridge.* From the first he was doubtless intended to fill the post of rector of Grasmere, as the patronage belonged to the family. Truly, the living for the moment was worth no more than £18 11s. 7d., the stipend paid by the tithe-holder; but Gabriel Croft's lease of the tithes was to lapse in 1647, when they would again belong to the rector. So when Wilson was found to be in the last straits for money, John Ambrose came forward (with the lease in view) to adjust matters. Under date January, 1647, Harrison entered in his book:—

pd. to Mr. Wilson P'son of gresmire accordinge to articles made betwixt Mr. Wm. and him by doctor Ambrose order for delapidations for gresmire Rectorie and for confirmeinge all the tythes of Rydall at 20s P' annm. duringe his life upon his agrement 24 mch 1646, and a bill 15 li lent money deliuered him in, and pd. him this daie more to make up the Some to 22 li 10s, set down by doctor Ambrose 7 li 10s od.

Thus the broken-down parson was mercifully left in his dilapidated house with his debt cleared, a few pounds in hand, and the prospect of £1 yearly in lieu of the Rydal demesne tithe, which was the ancient prescription.

Little as it was, it was better than nothing, and the incoming of other tithes to the parson was problematic, even if he were again allowed to serve the cure. But this doubtful future he had not long to face. The church register of that year records on June 26th "buryall Henry Willson Clerk of Gresmyre."

There is scarcely a doubt that the Rev. John Ambrose was at once nominated to the post by the Fleming family. In evidence given for the Restoration lawsuit over the tithes, it is stated that he had been inducted "about 15 years since," and had kept the office and officiated, till ejected by "the late usurpers." The position with tithes restored to it, was worth a struggle to keep, and the parish

* Dr. Magrath's *Flemings in Oxford.*

elders and the Presbyterian party at large would seem to have offered no real opposition to this powerful nominee.

That party indeed was losing ground all over England, where a personal examination before administration of the sacrament—rigidly enforced under the Scotch system of eldership—was much disliked ; and by 1649 its control over church affairs was practically at an end.*

The successes of the Parliamentary army had besides, after the victory of Naseby (1645), brought the Independents into power. Without passing a law to annul the Presbyterian scheme, they brought forward in Parliament various fresh ones of their own ; and in 1650 a bill was framed for " the better propagating of the Gospel " in Northumberland, Cumberland, Westmorland and Durham, these counties having petitioned that the vexed question of " settling ministers " might be finally resolved. The Act was to hold good for three years ; and after a slight extension it was abandoned, as the Commissioners appointed to carry it out had not given satisfaction. It was while the Commissioners under the Act were in office, and no doubt by them, that Ambrose, an episcopalian and a Royalist, and nominated moreover by a family of recusants, was ejected. In the depositions taken at Ambleside, October, 1663, for the tithe lawsuit, John Newton of Ambleside declared that the ejection took place about Martinmas, 1653 ; and " John Wallace of Kendall clerk," aged 32, gave evidence " that the complainant Ambrosse, by some of the late usurped powers was sequestered out of the parish church of Grasmere, sitting at Newcastle on Tyne before 1653, after which this deponent officiated in the said cure 1653, 4 and 5 ; and after he left one John Tompson, clerk, officiated till complainant was restored. During deponent's officiating most

* Shaw's *Church under the Commonwealth.*

of the parishioners paid their tithes to him, and owned him as patron; and he believes they did the like to Thomson." *

Wallas was clearly placed in the Rev. John Ambrose's post by the Independents, who now—with John Archer at their head—ruled the municipal and religious affairs of Kendal, for the Parliament, by a strong-handed committee; and that it was an ill-judged choice as well as an ill-favoured one (at least by one section of the community) is certain. By no religious party should John Wallas have been considered a suitable pastor for the wide and conservative parish, since he was either a man of low, disorderly life, or unfortunate in making enemies who could successfully libel him. In 1655 he was summoned before the justices at the Quarter Sessions upon two charges. One was the attempted ravishment of Clara Barwis of Loughrigg, "a virgin" twenty-two years old, and of this offence he was declared not guilty; while the unhappy girl—likewise charged with "ye detestable sinne of fornication with John Wallass Clke"—was by an irrational and shameful verdict sentenced to three months imprisonment for the joint offence. The other charge against him was an assault upon one John Hird; but as he brought a counter charge against Hird, this disturbance of "ye publique peace" must have assumed the aspect of a free fight.†

Wallas was not long to enjoy unchallenged his position at Grasmere. The situation was being watched by one who only awaited opportunity for action. It was a time of unrest and seething thought; and in 1651 George Fox, after beholding his vision of blood—when he ran through the streets of Lichfield crying "Woe, woe"—had begun his wandering life as a preacher. The country was swayed to and fro by contending religious factions. The more

* Ex. Deps., 15 Chas. II., Mich. 33, Westmorland.
† Book of Quarter Sessions Indictments, Kendal Corporation.

sober and rational-minded among these, shocked by the confusion that prevailed, formed themselves into " Voluntary Associations," under which the acting church authorities of each district—whether Independent or Presbyterian—united for the purpose of settling (if this were possible) the vexed questions of the administration of the sacrament and the ordination of ministers. At once an Association was formed for Cumberland and Westmorland, where the success that attended George Fox's first missionary journey through the distracted counties in 1652-3, had brought consternation to all sections of the Puritan party, and under the leadership of Mr. Richard Gilpin it proceeded to action.* Meetings for the settlement of church affairs were held every month at Carlisle, Penrith and Cockermouth, and in 1656 the counties put forth a joint manifesto, called " Articles of Association."

It was the existence of this body with its moderate and conciliatory policy, that doubtless enabled the new squire of Rydal to take the step he had for some time been preparing. Barely of age in 1654, and not yet in possession of the family estates, he nevertheless—while studying law in London—kept his eye on the condition of affairs in Grasmere and sought how he might—if not restore his kinsman Ambrose to the rectory—at least oust the intruder. An entry in his accounts of 1s. paid on May 24th " for ye Parrishioners of Gresmire their Caveat " shows that he had secured the support of part of the parish at least. Again on June 27th he paid 1s. 6d. " for a cop. of the Refferees names concerning Wallas." Without doubt he was preparing, even to the co-operation of Mr. Brathwaite of Ambleside Hall, for the swift stroke of ejection which was carried through on the eve of his own entrance to Rydal by his faithful servant John Banks. John communicated the result in the following letter :—†

* Fox's *Journals*. He says that he had " large meetings " in Westmorland.
† Rydal Hall MSS.

Hounoured Sir,

I praise God I got saffe to Rydale wth the oxen on Saturday at night where I was fforced to staye all night it was so late I acquainted the P'ishors that you had sent them word to get a minister every Lord's daye till such tyme as you presented one, and that the might paye them out off the tythes, but none would meddle unless I would goe to the Church and appear wth them soe I was fforced either to neglect it or send to Mr. Turner off Amblesyd to procure him to goe to preach wch I did And he went to your Cousin Bratwhait to aske his advice and leave that he might goe, soe he came to Rydale and I went along wth him But Wallas seeing us cum almost at the Church went quite away to Langdale Chapple whether he intended to goe beffore or noe I knowe not But he lefft the Clarke to oppose us who would not suffer Mr. Turner to read in the usuall place soe I wished Mr. Turner to goe into the pulpit and officiate But the Clark begun to read a Chapter and I bid him giue over but he would not soe I shutt the booke soe Mr. Turner read a Chappter and sung a psalme and begune to preach and when the sermon was done I spoke to some of the P'ishoners to procure every Lords daye a minister & pay them off theire tithes.

Conyston this 11 Feb. 1655. Your obedient servant

John Bankes.

Good John, with the squire's authority at his back and the co-operation of the Ambleside curate (a Presbtyerian no doubt), had successfully carried the situation through for that day, but his spirit quailed before it, as did that of the people. Under date February 18th he again wrote to his absent master :—

I should be glad to hear ffrom you iff you have heard anything ffrom Oxford or London concerninge the P'sonage of Grasmire, ffor wallas keepes the place still and saith he will doe it and that he is instructed by Mr. Archer to keepe it til such tyme as he present another, And he saith that he will cause Mr Turner to be put off his place ffor goeing that one daye to officiate there, Sir I desire that you will be pleased iff you heare anythinge to lett me knowe that I may encourage the P'ishoners ffor the are nowe more dismayed then the were beffore.

In a postscript he reverts to the subject :—

Sir it will not be amisse to remynd them aboue (probably meaning any grandee with whom young Daniel might come into contact during his honeymoon visits) concerning Grasmire ffor it is the Generall oppinion off all heare that Mr. Archer will doe you a preiudice in it iff he can.

Mr. Archer was of course disputing the right of the Rydal squire to nominate. But he and the Independents were yet to learn the indomitable nature of the will that now opposed theirs. The young squire, too wise to attempt the reinstating of his kinsman, and assuming the right to nominate, appointed one John Thompson to the rectory : and he won his way in spite of obstacles placed in it.

	li	s	d
10 ber 4, 56. Spent at Penrith when Mr. Thompson appeared there to showe unto ye Coms. by wt. title hee officied att Gresmer	00	01	06

John Banks, then doing business in London, wrote in perplexity on October 23rd, saying that counsel's opinion was talked of in connection with the matter. Thompson, however, kept his post. He may have acted in tune with the Presbyterians for the time being, but at the Restoration he returned at once to the uses of the re-established Church of England. At the Quarter Sessions held at Kendal, September, 1660, William Willson of Langdale was charged with " disquietinge, abuseinge, & disturbinge John Tompson Clerk vicar of Gressmire in readinge ye booke of comon prayer or service of ye Church & in his collaton or preachinge at Langdale Chappell " on the 26th, " beinge ye lord's day " and the said Willson, refusing to submit or to swear the oath of allegiance, was committed to gaol, with the option of a fine of 100 marks.* Willson indeed was a Quaker or Friend, who abjured all oaths—

* Book of Indictments, Kendal Corporation.

a fact at first misunderstood, and which so frequently caused their committal on political grounds. He was one of George Fox's most fiery adherents, and a speaker among the little band that had sprung up in the parish during the anarchy; and in denouncing the clergy on their own ground (the "steeple-house") he did but imitate his master.

On the other hand John Wallas—who had apparently been appointed by his friends to another church—was charged before the Justices with not reading the Book of Common Prayer, as ordained by law. His next appearance at court, in 1663, was in connection with the plot against the king and government, lately discovered. He was suspected of being mixed up in it, and was committed to Appleby gaol for three months.

The young squire of Rydal, Daniel Fleming, had now a free hand in the congenial task of setting the church of Grasmere on the old footing. There was some delay or uncertainty, however, in the return of his cousin Ambrose to the rectory. The church register contains a note of money collected, August 25th, 1661, and this is signed by John Brathwaite, "Rector of Grasmere," by John Browk, "curate," and the churchwardens; and John Browk's signature as curate occurs again August 7th, 1663. But it is certain that Parson Ambrose soon made good his claim to the position of rector, and that John Brathwaite remained as his principal curate in charge. He was a man who had seemingly no mind for strife or commotion. He showed supineness in allowing the squire to conduct the dispute about the tithes which now arose; as well as later to oppose the scheme of the Ambleside folk to secure the privileges of baptism and burial for their chapel. On this occasion the excuse was made of his being then (1674) in residence as Fellow of St. John's, Cambridge.* Perhaps he loved too well the cloistered

* See Cumberland and Westmorland Society's *Transactions*, vol. vi., N.S.

ease of the University. He never attempted to reside at the rectory, and would seem to have arranged for bachelor quarters to be fitted up at the hall, where he might spend such time as he thought it necessary to devote to the parish. These entries occur in the great account book :—

	li	s	d
Aug. 11. 59. Payed unto Grigg for 3 dayes paveing & guttering of ye Roome under Mr. Ambrose's Chamber	00	01	00
Jan. 26. 59. Lost at Tables unto Parson Ambrose..	00	01	00

Such peaceful hours of card-playing—restricted to the festival time of Christmas—were occasionally varied by polemical events ; if so, we may interpret the scene at the Loughrigg inn :—

	li	s	d
June 23, 1669. Spent at Braythey Bridge end in ye contest betwixt Jos. Penny & my Cosin Ambrose..	00	00	06

For the recovery of the tithes, the rector relied entirely on the legal knowledge and acute judgment of his relative ; and the draft of the Bill presented in the Court of Exchequer, and now lying at Rydal Hall, is in the latter's handwriting. From this we learn that certain parishioners refused to pay tithes to the newly-instituted rector, and that their refusal was moreover of some years standing, as neither Wallas nor Thompson had been in a position to compel payment from the refractory. There are twenty-one names cited in the bill. Many of these were no doubt conscientious objectors, though some would be of that ever-present class, who seize any excuse for shirking an obligation. From the wording of the petition, that the objectors " pretended " John Ambrose never was parson of Grasmere, nor had been lawfully restored, it looks as if there had been some opposition to the squire's change of minister at the Restoration. Mr. Thomas Brathwaite had assisted him as we have seen in the removal of the Independent, but now the expulsion of the

(probable) Presbyterian minister in favour of the Episcopalian roused the ire no doubt of the Presbyterian party, headed by the Ambleside Hall family. Robert Brathwaite, gentleman, was younger brother of Thomas, and had inherited from his father Gawen not only the property of High House, Hugill (where he generally resided) but the small " manor " of Baisbrowne in Langdale. It was on this estate that tithes were claimed from its owner, who heads the list of recalcitrant parishioners. Another prominent statesman among them was Christopher Nicholson, of Padmire, Grasmere, of whose religious persuasion we know nothing. A third was Francis Benson, freeholder; he, along with Mr. Brathwaite and Michael Benson, had served as an elder on the Presbyterian *Classis*, and had now become an ardent Quaker. These, with the rest, had—so the petition declared—combined to resist payment, and had persuaded others to do the like. Their position was certainly weakened by the fact that they had failed to pay these customary dues for its support, while they were satisfied with the ministry; yet the demand now made for fourteen years' arrears, may well have irritated them. The claim upon Mr. Robert Brathwaite's estate stands thus, when placed in the form of a table :—

	£	s.	d.
Meadows, of which the " tythe-hay " is worth yearly	0	0	10
Ten cow's milk each yearly 2d.	0	1	8
One tithe-calf	0	1	8
Two foals, each 2d.	0	0	4
Three hundred sheep, of which, the tythe wool is worth yearly	2	0	0
One hundred lambs paying a customary sum each year of 1s. 2d.		11	8
Three sows, the tithe pigs being yearly			10
Ten geese, ten hens, and ten ducks, tithe yearly		5	0
two swarms of bees, customary payment 2d. each			4
Five bushels of plums, with other fruit, tithe worth		3	0
Twenty acres, pastured with barren cattle ..		5	0
Hemp grown, tithe worth yearly		2	0
Oblaytions		2	6

The demand made upon each of the foremost defendants in the lawsuit was exactly the same, showing that the estimate of the tithes was a purely conventional one. It amounted then for each prosperous statesman to £3 14s. 10d.—a large sum compared with the commutation of the Rydal Hall tithe; and when this figure is multiplied by fourteen for arrears, a total of £52 7s. 8d. is reached, which was likely enough to arouse dismay and opposition. The case dragged on; and on October 20th, 1663, a commission sat at Ambleside, when witnesses were called on both sides. The smaller statesmen were no longer cited, while Robert Brathwaite, Christopher Nicholson, Francis Benson, and John Benson stood as the defendants.* The verdict is not known; but payment of tithes once more became customary. The refusal of the Quakers to pay the church rate will be noticed hereafter.

The tithes seem often to have been let on lease, which saved the rector the trouble and annoyance of collection. Edward Benson of Loughrigg declared, in 1663, before the commission, that he and Miles Mackereth and John Brathwaite held a lease of them from Parson Ambrose for three years, which ended April 15th, 1665. About the year 1726 they were apparently farmed by the statesmen jointly. A paper exists † entitled "Grasmere Tyth Corn lett to the Inhabitants Anno 1726. Some wanting." It contains the names of 55 landholders, with the amount—varying from 1s. to 18s.—paid by each as an equivalent for the tithe of corn. The total is £18 6s.

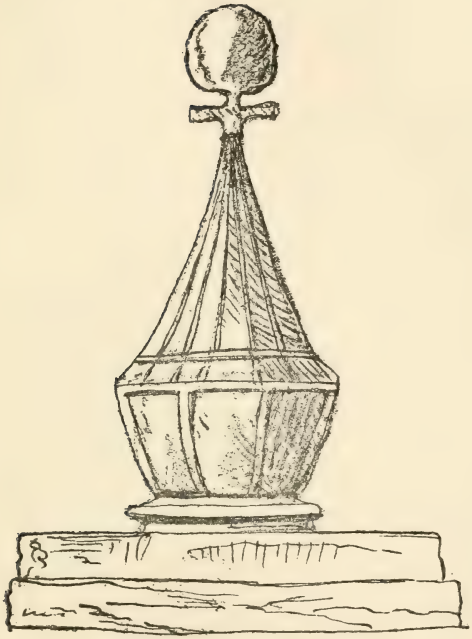
This agrees with the statement of Miss Craik, who in 1752 was corresponding with Sir William Fleming on behalf of her incapable brother, the rector. While expressing her surprise that he should think of renting the tithes of corn, she tells him that Mr. Craik's collector had

* Ex. Deps., 15 Chas. II., Mich. 33, Westmorland.

† Rydal Hall MSS.

been persuaded to grant a three years' lease at £14 10s., which was too little. The salary of the collector, she adds, had been in a former year £5.

The growth of corn increased seemingly in this district as the eighteenth century went by, owing no doubt to its heightened price throughout the kingdom. The tithe of it accordingly went up in value, while wool, from the decay of the cloth trade, went down.



FONT IN GRASMERE CHURCH.

(FROM TABLE BOOK BY WM. HONE, 1827.)

PART IV

THE FABRIC

THE FURNITURE

THE UPKEEP OF THE CHURCH

CLEANING AND REPAIRS

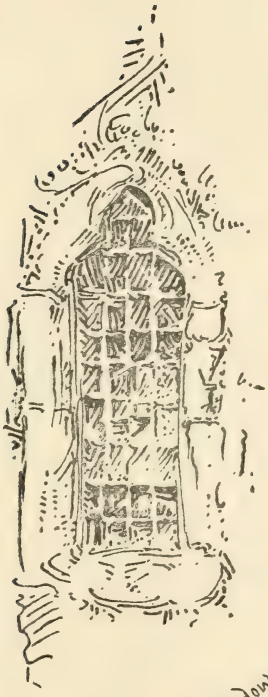
EXTRACTS FROM CHURCHWARDENS' ACCOUNTS

THE FABRIC

GRASMERE Church, as it stands at present, is itself the sole guide we have to its age and the method of its building. No document exists, prior to the Restoration, that concerns the fabric. It was then apparently the same as it is now. As one steps within the portal, and sees through the gloom its strange double nave, the rude spaces broken through the thick intersecting wall, and the massive, split, misshapen timbers that support its roof, one wonders who were its planners and builders. Here surely in this strange and original structure we see a work conceived and carried out by the very men who worshipped within it. Sturdy, strong, and self-dependent, they would seem to have asked little or no aid either in money or skill, for the rearing and decoration of their church. Yet its builders, when they came to remodel, if not to rebuild their ancient place of worship, must have known edifices of statelier plan. There was Kendal, their great centre, with a church that must always have kept abreast of the time in architectural beauty, and which—from the earliest fifteenth century at least, showed the dressed columns of stone, the soaring arches, and chantried aisles which yet remain. St. Martin's of

Windermere, too, in the next parish, possessed a duly proportioned nave, chancel, and aisle ; and the columns—built though they were of undressed stone—rose to support a clerestory and the evenly-timbered roof. Hawkshead again (whither the dalesmen often repaired to market or fair) owned a church that was ruder than the others, indeed—since its huge cylindrical piers support circular arches, and the timber of its roof is rough-hewn—but had a well-proportioned plan for nave and aisles.

These places, it is true, had advantages over Grasmere. Kendal was in contact with the great world and with the heads of the church, who visited it regularly. It had, besides, access to freestone. Windermere, like Hawkshead, had to let the intractable slate of the neighbouring mountains suffice for the main structure : hence the great piers without capitals and the plaster finish of their interiors. But Windermere had an advantage in its nearness to Kendal ; and Hawkshead in its association with the abbey of Furness, which was easily accessible from there. Grasmere, on the other hand, was probably ignorant of the beauties of the Abbey Church of St. Mary's at York, to which it was attached. The church was practically shut up within the remotest chamber of the mountains, and could only be reached by 17 miles of bad road from Kendal, over which no wheels could travel. But with no freestone near, with only the hard mountain slate to rive, or the boulders of the beck to gather ; without traditional skill and with very little hard cash, our builders of Grasmere proceeded—when need came—to alter and enlarge their House of God by such simple methods as house and barn " raising " had made familiar to them. Thus we read the story of the structure as it stands at present, and see that the builders had clearly little help from the outer world. We see, too, that this structure was an alteration of an earlier one ; which was not itself the first, for the first stone fane probably



Old Window in the South Wall. Outside View

replaced a wooden one, either here or on Kirk How. It was doubtless of that simple oblong form, without chancel or tower, which was technically known as a chapel,* and of which specimens have remained among the mountains to this day. But an *ecclesia parochia*, possessed of daughter chapels, could not be permitted by the higher powers—whether of church or manor—to retain so lowly a form. The manorial lords may have interested themselves in its reconstruction, though there is no evidence of the fact. In any case, it is likely that the Abbey of St. Mary would take the necessary steps to bring it up to the requirements of its position, and of the worship to be conducted within its walls. The visiting brother would carry accounts of the remote little church to York ; and a monk skilled in architecture could be brought over to plan a new building, and to direct its construction. The customary model for a small parochial church would be adopted, which allowed a chancel for priests officiating at the mass ; then a nave without aisles for the worshippers, lighted by narrow windows—for before glazing was possible the opening had to be guarded from weather by wooden shutters—and to the west a tower, in which to hang the bells that should call the parishioners from far.

Such doubtless was the existing church in its first state, and of it there may remain the tower, the porch, the south wall, and one window. There are indications that before its enlargement it was more ornate then now. Freestone was used, though sparingly, to emphasize the chief architectural points. The opening into the tower, piercing four feet of solid wall, has a moulding of freestone (now battered away) to mark the spring of its slightly-pointed arch ; while a string-moulding is discernible in the north wall of the nave, which may once have

* *Gothic Architecture in England*, Francis Bond, p. 191.

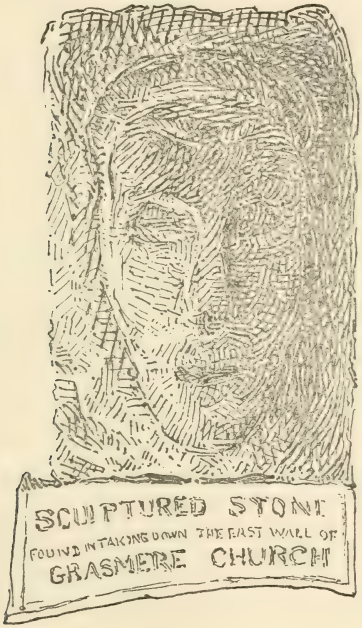
accentuated the window heads. The windows—if we may suppose the one left between porch and tower to be a relic of the original set*—were simple openings finished by an "ogee" arch. The font may be as old as the window, if not older. Its mouldings, which originally followed the rim and divided the bowl into a hexagon, are almost obliterated; and though no doubt it suffered during the Commonwealth, when it was degraded from its sacred use, the damage may not be wholly due to that cause. The freestone used in the building was unfortunately friable, and must have suffered at every alteration—such as the piercing of the north wall by arches, and the building up of the tower-arch for a vestry. It could not be replaced by the remodellers; and they seem to have intentionally chipped and levelled it, and then freely whitewashed it over, with a general view to tidiness. They even went beyond this; for when the east wall was reconstructed in 1851, a stone carved with the likeness of a face was found built into it. This is now in the Kendal Museum. The piscina, too, now refixed (and, unfortunately, redressed), was found, covered with plaster, lower down in the same wall.

Profile of Stone Head

The worn, maltreated freestone might, if we knew its origin, tell something of the tale of the building. A well-squared yellow block, recently laid bare in the porch, is certainly not the red sandstone of Furness.

* This is almost a certainty. A drawing made by a friend of Mrs. Fletcher, of Lancrigg, showed two like windows on the south side; but it is unfortunately lost.

Now should the age of the fabric, decorated thus simply though judiciously, be questioned, it must be owned that there is nothing to indicate its being older than the fourteenth century. It is true that a western tower with no entrance from outside was a feature of



many Saxon churches, but such towers continued to be built for parish churches until a late date. The rough masonry of the Grasmere tower is due to the material; and the massive boulders used in the foundation were no doubt gathered from the beck, whose proximity must have been highly convenient for builders who were poorly

equipped for the quarrying of their slate rock. The "ogee" or trefoiled arch was a development of the Decorated style of architecture, which evolved the form from the elaborate traceries of its windows.* The Decorated style is roughly computated as lasting from the open to the close of the fourteenth century, and the period of its use coincides fairly with the time when our church fell under the influence of the monastery.

A church of primitive size would be sufficient for the folk of the three townships, while they lived in scattered homesteads and were all bent upon husbandry, with short intervals of warfare with the Scots. But it would become too small for a growing population that throve in times of peace upon the wool trade.† With walk-mills in the valleys, and families growing rich as clothiers, some extension of the church would be necessary; and this extension seems to have been started in a fashion strangely simple. Leaving the walls of the edifice intact with its roof, a space almost equal—for it is but one yard narrower—was marked off on the northern side, enclosed by walls and roofed over. The intervening wall could not be removed, because the builders were incapable of spanning the double space by a single roof. It was therefore left to sustain the timbers of the two roofs, and through its thickness (over three feet) spaces were broken in the form of simple arches. Thus—though one is called an aisle—two naves were practically formed, separated by the pierced wall. The date of this enlargement is uncertain. If we place it in the era of the prosperity of the townships from the cloth trade, it could have been done no earlier than the reign of Henry the Seventh, and no later than the early days of Elizabeth; while a supposition that it was not taken in hand until

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* S. Holborne: *Architecture of European Religions.*

† See Fullers and Freeholders: *Trans. of Cumberland and Westmorland Ant. So.*, N.S.

the dissolution of the monastery had thrown the men of the three townships on their resources is strengthened by the character of the work.

How long the enlarged church remained under a double roof cannot be said. Trouble would be sure to come from the long, deep valley, where snow would lodge and drip slowly inside. Clearly there was urgent need for action and radical alteration when the powerful Mr. John Benson, of Baisbrowne, made his will in 1562. A clause of this runs : " Also I giue and bequeath towardes the Reparacions of the church of gresmyre XXs so that the Roofe be taken down and maide oop againe."

But how to construct a single roof over the double space ? This insoluble problem (to them) was met by the village genius in a singular manner. The arched midwall was not abolished. It was carried higher by means of a second tier of arches whose columns rest strangely on the crowns of the lower. These upper openings permit the principal timbers to rest in their old position, while the higher timbers are supported by the abruptly ending wall. Thus a single pitched roof outside is attained, sustained by a double framework within. The result is unique, and remains as a monument of the courage, resource, and devotion to their church of our mountain dalesmen.

[Since this chapter was written the stone face—p. 104—has been returned by Kendal to Grasmere.—Ed.]

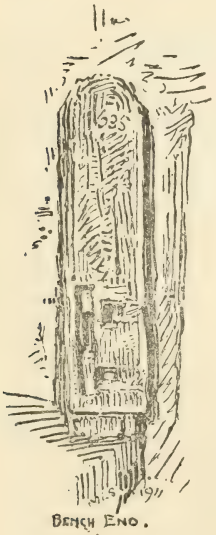
THE FURNITURE

OF early furniture there is, of course, no trace within the church. All the accessories of the ritual of the mass, whether in metal, wood, or textile, as well as such as would be required for processions on Rogation Days, were swept away at the Reformation. A reminder of these processions may perhaps be found in the field at the meeting of the roads near the present cemetery, which goes by the name of Great Cross, for here, doubtless, a Station of the Cross stood where the priest and the moving throng would halt and turn. Another field is named Little Cross.

One upright piece of oak, roughly cut with the date 1635, remains to show us the style of the old benches—or forms as they were called—which filled the space above the earthen floor. The bench itself, to judge by the aperture left in this end-piece, would appear to have been no more than six inches wide, and almost as thick; the bench-end, which was further steadied by a slighter bar below, was sunk into the ground.

These benches could not have been fixed with any permanence, for the earthen floor was often broken up for the burial of parishioners. The custom of burial inside the church was a favourite one, and was continued down to the nineteenth century. While the choir was reserved for the knight or gentleman (and of the former there were none within the parish) and for the priest, the statesman was buried in the nave or aisle; and only

the landless man or cottar would be laid in the garth outside. Frequently in wills the testator expressed his wish to be buried as near as possible to a deceased relative, or the place where he had worshipped. He was in any case buried within the limits of his township's division in the church. In 1563 Mr. John Benson, of Baisbrowne, who was a freeholder and probably a cloth merchant, desired to be buried " in the queare in the parish church of gresmire as neare where my wife lyethe as conveniently may be." After the Fleming family of Rydal and Coniston became possessed of the advowson, they were many of them—beginning with William the purchaser in 1600—buried within the choir; though no monument or tablet exists prior to the one commemorating Sir Daniel's father, 1653. The tithe-paper shows the rate of payment for interment in the higher or lower choir. Besides fees paid to the officials of the church, the townships, through their individual wardens, took payment for all " ground broken," as the phrase went, within their division, and the receipts from this source appear regularly in their accounts. The usual fee for an adult was 3s. 4d. (a quarter mark), and out of this 2d. had to be paid by the wardens for laying the flag. Less was charged for children, while women who died in childbirth were buried for nothing but the actual cost of the



BENCH END.

flag-laying. Under the year 1693, when seven parishioners were laid within the church soil, we read " & more for the burying of two Women yt. dyed in Childbed in the Church ooli oos 04d." There were seven burials in 1723, five in 1732, five in 1766, and four in 1773. As late as 1821 Rydal and Loughrigg buried one inhabitant in the church, and Langdale three. It is singular that the Grasmere township discontinued the custom before the two others, for no interment took place in her division after 1797.

The following extracts from the wardens' accounts show how frequently the floor of the church was disturbed and levelled :—

		£	s.	d.
1674	It. for lying Flags of 2 graves in our third ..	00	00	04
1689	For lying the Grave Flags and mending Forms	00	00	06
1690	All three townships pay for " lying Flags and mending Fourmes."			
1713	For Lying ye Flaggs upon Several Graves wh. had fallen in	00	01	00
1728	For mending the Flaggs and Fourms ..	00	02	02
1729	For flagging and Leavelling ye Church floor	00	00	10
1763	Grasmere mende forms and levell flags, 1s. 6d. ; Loughrigg and beneath Moss the same, 1s. 8d.			
1772	New flags bought, and extensive work done upon the floor, at a total cost of £9 8s. 1¾d. : the flagging of the " low end " not being completed till next year.			
1774	For " mending Furmes in Church & a Soal-tree " 12s. 4d. is paid.			
1782	Grasmere purchases an oak tree for seats in her third, 13s. 4d., carpenter 13s. 4d. ; with a final 11s. 6d. next year for repair of the old ones.			
1783	Loughrigg and beneath Moss proceeds to the same ; and two new " Sole-trees " [foot-rail] with the railing and repairing of four forms cost £1 9s. od., besides 1s. 8d spent in ale at the public auction of the contract, and 2d. for advertisement of same.			

		s	d
1811	For Levelling Church & mending Windows ..	1	6
1819	To clearing Church of Stones and Rubbish ..	1	6
1828	Outlay unusual. Grasmere shows " To Flags & Flagging in the Church " 19s. 4d. " To repairing seates " 2s. od. Loughrigg and beneath Moss " To Ambleside Churchwarden paid for New Seats " £2 1s. 6d. Langdale " To Repairing Flags in Church " £1 6s. 6d. ; Seats and Wood 19s. 9d.		
1833	Grasmere repairs " fermes " in Church, 6d.		

The soil beneath the church is thus literally sown with bones, and the wonder is that room could be found for so many. But in this connection it must be remembered that the practice of burying without coffins was the usual one until a comparatively recent period.

No wonder that plague broke out again and again, that the fragrant rush was needed for other purpose than warmth, and that fires within the church could not have been tolerated.

The custom concerning these forms or *ferms*, as locally pronounced, was rigid. Every man had a right, as townsman or member of a *vill*, to a recognized seat within the church, which was obtained through the officials of his township. This seat was, of course, within the division of his township. The women sat apart from the men, and even the maids from the old wives. So tenaciously was the hereditary seat clung to, that reference to it may occasionally be met with in a will.*

* Edward Forrest, of Ambleside, when providing, in 1637, for his younger son (then under age) as a landholder, adds " and it is my mind and will that my said son Richard shall sitt next his elder brother Edward in the same forme, and likewise to haue another seate for a woman in the other forme, or seate accustomed for women." This was in Ambleside Chapel, but the custom was general.

Mr. George Browne possesses a copy of a document drawn up in 1629, after there had been contention, which gives the order of seating in Troutbeck Chapel. As this has not been printed, it may be briefly summarized here. A plan accompanies the paper. The general order was, for the men to be seated round the chancel, and upon a certain number of the front benches

Some serious alteration in the allotment of seats was probably made in 1676, judging from these entries in the wardens' accounts.

	li	s	d
Ittem for Laughrig third for lifting seatts upon Church & when ther names was sent in writting..	00	2	00
Itt. for grasmyre third for ye like	00	2	00

The Squire of Rydal, as soon as the Restoration permitted it, set to work to furnish that part of the church in which he worshipped suitably to the honour and dignity of his family. The family seats had before his time long stood vacant, even if they had been ever regularly used. His predecessor, John, as an avowed Roman Catholic, had preferred to pay heavy fines rather than obey the law in the matter of attendance at the Communion of the parish church; and there is little doubt that the mass was celebrated in private for him at Rydal Hall. John's mother, Dame Agnes, may have attended during her widowhood; but her husband William, the purchaser of the tithes and patronage, must—always supposing him to be a good Protestant—have attended more frequently at Coniston.

But Squire Daniel was a pillar of the church as well as of the State in his neighbourhood, and his accommodation within the building was framed in view of the fact. The following entry occurs in his account book, under July 13th, 1663. The monument referred to is doubtless the brass tablet we now see in the chancel, and it appears to have waited for its fixing for ten years after its purchase in London :—

	li	s	d
Spent at Gresmer, when ye wainscott seat, & my father's monum.t were set up	00	00	06

on the north side, which was free. The women were behind the men, five being placed on each form. They paid for their seats, at a diminishing rate from the front, the price starting at 20d.—one-eighth of a mark. The plan gives the place of every townswoman, and it is expressly stated that if there be a young wife in the family as well as an old one, she is to take her place on another form.

And two days later the bill for the seat was paid. It is not very intelligible, but reads thus :—

	li	s	d
Paid unto Christ. Robinson of Kendall (Joyner) for 10 yards and foot ¾ of double wainscott at 4s P' yard, and yards 4 foot ¾ of single wainscott at 3s P' yard, for a Board, Ledging & knobs in all (being for ye seats at Gresmere) ye sum of ..	03	06	06

No doubt this is the fine old pew which still stands between the pulpit and the priest's door of the chancel. In it, for nearly forty years, the squire worshipped, with his growing family about him. The regularity of his attendance is shown by his account book, where every collection is entered ; and in spite of his frequent ridings on public and private business, he never but once (till the close of the book in 1688) missed the four yearly communions in his parish church. On that occasion, when Easter Day, 1682, was spent at Hutton, he attended a service at Grasmere on the previous Good Friday (held possibly by his order), at which his Easter offering was given.

Given this day (being Good-Fryday) at ye Offertory in Gresmere Church for myselfe 5s., for Will, Alice, Dan, Barbara & Mary 5s.

The sums given were invariable : 5s. for himself, 2s. 6d. for his wife (while she lived), and 1s. for each child.*

It was in 1675 that the sad necessity rose of putting up a monument to his excellent wife. The brass was apparently cut in London, for he sent to his Uncle Newman there :—

3li 10s. od. towards ye paying for my late dear wifes Epitaphs engraving in brass.

Though 2s. 6d. more was paid afterwards.

* For the custom of Easter offerings, see Canon Simmons' Notes to *The Lay Folks' Mass Book*, pp. 239-241.

Unto Rich. Washington of Kendall for amending of my late Dear Wifes Epitaph in brass.

Washington, who was entered in 1642 among the "Armerers Fremen and Hardwaremen" of Kendal, and was mayor of the city in 1685,* was wholly entrusted with the next family brass; for we find that under date February 10th, 1682, he was paid "for ye Brass & the cutting of ye Epitaph for my Mother and Uncle Jo. Kirkby, £4 10s 0d which my brothers Roger & William are to pay me again." But this was for Coniston Church.

It was after the squire's second son, Henry, had become Rector of Grasmere, and by his encouragement, that the church was freshly beautified and "adorned." The entry of 1s. paid in 1662 to James Harrison for "makeing ye sentences w'in ye church" shows that something was at once attempted; for it was as imperative that a church should be "sentenced" as that the Royal Arms should be put up, or the Commandments or Lord's Prayer. All these were devices (expressly enjoined by the sovereign) for covering up the nakedness of the churches after they had been stripped by the Reformers of all objects of beauty and reverence, in roods, images of saints, tapestries, &c., &c.; for Elizabeth and many of her subjects had been horrified at the effect of changes that appeared to rob the churches of their sacred character.† Frescoes on plaster had, of course, been used from early times as a means of teaching Holy Writ and Legend to the unlettered folk, and fragments of such pictures are still to be seen in Carlisle Cathedral. But at the Reformation, when plaster and paint were again resorted to, only the written word was permitted (with the exception of the Lion and Unicorn); and the wall-spaces of the churches became

* *Boke off Recorde of Kirkbie Kendal.*
† *English Church Furniture*, Cox and Harvey.

covered with texts and catechisms,* which were surrounded or finished by " decent flourishes."†

In its turn the reformed style has disappeared, even in churches peculiarly suited to it, like those of the Lake District, where the rough unworkable slate is bound to be covered by a coat of plaster. During recent restorations, however, at both Windermere and Hawkshead the sentences were found under coats of whitewash, and they were in a truly conservative spirit painted in again. Grasmere, weary of " mending " the sentences and whitening round them, finally wiped them out in the last century, and substituted the ugly black boards painted with texts, which still hang between the archways. Fragments of the old sentences were descried when the walls were recently scraped and coloured.

It was in 1687 that a complete scheme of decoration was carried out within the church, and one James Addison, a favourite decorator in the district, was engaged for the purpose. The contract made with him is preserved in the churchwardens' book :—

Mr. Adison is to playster what is needfull & whiten all the Quire & Church except that within the insyde of the Arche of the steeple to paint the 10 Coman's on the one syde of the Quire window & the beliefe & Lordes prayer on the other with 8 sentences & florishes in the Quire & 26 sentences in the Church with decent Florishes & the Kinges Armes well drawn & adorned.

Later on comes the copy of an agreement in later handwriting :—

March the 29th An'o Dom'i 1687.

Mem'd. It was then agreed on by and between James Addison of Hornby in the County of Lancaster Painter on the one part

* An unusual catechism, printed in the Rev. F. J. Nurse's *History*, may be seen in the parish church of Windermere.

† So important was this scheme of decoration considered, that in the reign of Charles II. the Archbishop of Canterbury gave a commission to his " well-beloved in Christ," a craftsman who belonged to the " Art and mysterie of Paynterstayners of London " to carry it out in all those churches of his province where it was found wanting.—*English Church Furniture.*

and Mr. Henry Fleming of Grasmer the churchwardens and other Parishioners of the Parish aforesaid: That the said James Addison shall and will on this side the first day of August next after the date hereof sufficiently plaster wash with Lime and whiten all ye church of Grasmer aforesaid (except ye inside of the steeple) and well and decently to paint ye Tenne Commandm'ts, Lord's prayer and thirty Sentences at such places as are already agreed on together with the Kings Arms in proper colours and also to colour the pulpit a good green colour and also to flourish the Pillars and over all the Arches and doors well and sufficiently, the said Parson and Parishioners finding lime and hair onely. In consideration whereof the sd. Parson and Parishioners doe promise to pay him nine pounds Ten shillings when or so soon as the work shall be done.

And be it likewise remembered the s'd Parson and Parishioners gave him 05s in earnest and that the Parson is to pay the fifth part of the nine pounds Ten shillings, the parishioners being at the whole charge of the lime and Hair.

The names of the 18 Questmen

For Grasmer	For Langdale	Rydal Ambleside and Loughrigg.
Reg. Thompson	W. Satterthwaite	Thomas Benson
John Hird	Jno. Middlefell	Jo. Banks
Jo. Hawkrigge of townhead	Geo. Cowperthwaite	Reg. Braithwaite
	Chr. Dawson	Jo. Newton
Jo. Hawkrigge of Howhead	Leo. Benson	Jo. Braithwaite de * Hawkshead
Hen. Hird	James Dixon	Hen. Barrow
Eadwin Green		

Church Wardens

For Grasmer	Eadwin Green
	Rob't Hird
For Langdale	Geo. Cowperthwaite
	Leo. Benson
For Rydal Ambleside and Loughrigg	Ed. Benson de Highclose
	Tho Newton de Ambleside

* This is somewhat inexplicable unless the copyist, who has a late hand, has mistaken Howhead (in Ambleside) for Hawkshead. And the last figure in the account should be £1 18s.

Memorand. That to promote ye Painting of ye ch'h ye Parson did offer to pay according to ye proportion ye Quire did bear to ye whole ch'h to ye plastering washing w'h lime and painting of ye ten Command'ts Creed L'ds prayer and 30 sentences, tho' y'er had but been 4 or 5 Sentences in ye Quire before and now ye ten Comma'd'ts and Creed were to be painted on each side of the quire windows The Charge of all which was commuted at £8 0 0 and ye K'gs Arms and ye painting of ye pulpit at ye remainder. So that the quire appearing by measure to be a 5 part ye Parson was to pay £1 12s. 0d. but to be quit of the trouble of providing his proportion of lime and hair he did prefer to pay ye 5 part of the whole £9 10s. 0d. ye parish finding all lime and hair which was agreed to. Besides ye £9 10s. 0d. agreed to be paid there was 5s. 0d. given to the painter in earnest to have the work done well.

	£	s	d
March 29. Paid for ye 5 part of the earnest money given to the painter..	00	01	0
June 21. Paid to Mr. James Addison for ye parsons share of painting the Church being ye 5 part of £9 10 0	00	18	0

The contract included the painting of the pulpit of a cheerful green, as we read. It was a plain structure of wood, and the "Quission" bought for it in 1661, as well as the cloth then procured for the Communion Table, were doubtless worn out; for we learn from the churchwardens' Presentment for 1707 that these and some other points about the church had been found wanting by the higher church authorities. The paper runs:—

The defects found in our church for and at ye late Visitation, viz. The Floor of the Church-porch & Isles uneven Flagg'd; The South wall of the Inside fro' ye Bellfry unto ye East, dirty; A decent Reading-pew, Com'unio'-Table-cloth of Linen, & pulpet Cushio' wanting; A Table of degrees wanting, & a crackt Bell.

All these faults except two (viz. The Reading-pew & crackt Bell) are amended. The porch & Isles even Flagg'd. The Wall made white & clean, A decent Table-cloth, Pulpet-Cushion, & Table of degrees, procured.

A new Reading-pew is in making at present, & will shortly be perfected. & as for the Bell it was referr'd to Dr. Fleming's

discerec'on to be amended & made tuneable ; & he resolves in convenient time to call together & consult w'th the chief of his Parishion'rs to do it, & in w't time and manner, to the best Advantage."

Accordingly we find entries of the expense incurred by a few of these requirements :—

		li	s	d
1706	For Cloth, Silk, Fring and Tassles for ye pulpitt Cushion	01	02	05
	For Flocks harden and making ye pulpitt Cushion	00	03	01½
	For Cloth for ye Table Cloth and makeing	00	05	11
1709	For mending the Stairs and laying ye Flaggs in ye Clarks pew	00	10	00

Nothing is heard, however, of a new reading-pew, and in 1710 the old one was mended at a cost of 1s. 8d. The bells, as we shall see, had to wait.

Not until a hundred years later was a vestry thought of. In 1810 Thomas Ellis was paid 7s. for planning it, and George Dixon £12 2s. 1d. for its erection. It is said to have been made of wood, and simply partitioned off the north-west angle of the church. It was fitted with a " grate," that cost with carriage 19s. ; and this being set on the side nearest to the pews, diffused what must have been but a gentle warmth through the edifice. It is the first heating apparatus that we hear of, and the expenses for charcoal and wood, with 3s. paid annually to the clerk for setting on the fire, were small. Tradition says that while George Walker lighted the vestry fire he rang the eight o'clock bell—a call to matins which had survived the Reformation, and the service then abolished.*

Time brought other improvements. The harmony of a church choir entailed its special expenses. In 1812 the ladies of Rydal Hall, widow and heiress of Sir Michael Fleming, provided " Psalmody " for Grasmere church at

* *Mediæval Services in England.* Chr. Wordsworth. Tradition from Edward Wilson.

a cost of £2 2s., and for Langdale at £1 1s. Probably the price of this early tune-book was one guinea. A charge of 7s. 6d. appears in 1829 for a new pitch-pipe. A "singing school" was started, causing considerable expense in candles (12s. in 1844). Edward Wilson fitted the "singing pews" with drawers in 1851. There was apparently no instrumental music in the Grasmere choir, though there may have been in Langdale chapel to judge from an item of expense for violin strings.

Many odd expenses are noted in the accounts, as well as the replenishing of worn books and garments. A large Common Prayer Book cost in 1692 13s. 6d., and another in 1733 14s. Prayer Books began, too, to be

Old Pitch Pipe

supplied in the body of the church; the townships buying a few at a time, at a price varying from 6d. to 1s. In 1808 a new Bible cost £2 2s., while the price of a large Prayer Book in 1823 was £2 5s., and another in 1835 £1 12s.

The "surp-cloth," "surpless," or "surplice" was renewed at various prices. After the marvellously cheap one of 1661 (5s.; surely the product of the valley, in flax-growing, spinning, and weaving), others were got in 1697 for £1 12s., in 1730 for £1 11s. 4d., in 1734 for £2 7s. In 1755 a new one is set down at the modest sum of 1s. 5¾d., which, if multiplied by three, is barely 4s. 6d.; and in 1775 one (or perhaps the same) was altered for 1s. An amusing item appears in the receipt columns of the three townships in 1795, when they sold

the old surplice and divided the amount. "By $\frac{1}{3}$ of the Old Surplice 2s. $7\frac{1}{2}$d."

"Communion Linnen" cost in 1823 14s. 6d. In 1820 a surplice cost £2 18s. 4d., and in 1830 £1 17s. 9d.

THE UPKEEP OF THE CHURCH

THE one document that exists concerning the fabric of the church and of its upkeep was written as late as 1661, when the Episcopal Order of church government was restored.* There is every probability, however, that in substance it merely reinstitutes an old custom. The document is printed here :—

A true Cattollogue made the twenty-first day of Apprill in the 13th yeare of the Kings Ma'tyes reigne in the yeare of our lord god 1661 by the eighteene men Appointed for the good of the parish church of Gresmyre whos names are here under written that is to say what particulars both of the church & church-yard-wall ; and what parte is divided to every Third and what parte is not divided ; what hereafter shall be expressed & to whom they doe belong of right to be mayntayned & uphoulden. Imprimus the chancell or quire ought to be maintained by the parson or rector that is to say the roofe to the midle of the rigging soe ffarr as the quire doth extend and the quire doore & ffoure windowes within the Compass of quire : & the pues within the quire and all the body of the church both roofe walles & Timber doth belong to the whole parish equally amongst them that is to say ; Gresmyre third : Langdall Third & Loughrigg, Ridall & Ambleside third ; to be maintained & uphoulden every third Alike ; by even portions and likewise the roofe of the steple & the belle wheeles, things or any nessary thing whatsoever. Concerning the steple or within the steple all to be regarded & done at generall charges of those three thirds Abovementioned without any deniall ; & the door both at the topp & below ; & the 4 windowes Above at the bells and the steple window below ; and the east window opposight to the higher pillors ; & those doth belong to all the said 3 thirds equally Amongst Them to be mayntained & upholden ; Now for the particulars within the Church

* Rydal Hall MSS.

ffor every third, & how ffarr every third ought to brake ground; as ffolloweth viz: Gresmyre Third, ffrom the quire wae upon the South side of the Church and Their fformes to ye steple doore; with the Cross alley coming in at the posterne doore; and to the midle of the Alleys of the south side ffrom the quire wale; to the midle of the steple, doth belong to gresmyre third, & five formes next to Langdall quire wale; & to the midle of the alley, & Two short fformes at north side of the second piller & halfe of one fforme being between Loughrigg quire and Ridell fformes with the fformes upon the weste Sid of the Church next to the west doore; doth belong To gresmyre third And all the remaindor of the fformes upon the north sid of the Church to the midle of the north Alley doth belong to Langdall Third; & the midle of the church to the midle of the north Alley; & to the midle of the west alley; with the two crosse alleyes viz, one at the ffont & the other belowe the quire wale; doth belong to Loughrigg Ridall & Ambleside Third; And for the windowes belonging to this Loughrigg third here named, be in number Three being upon the south sid of the church; one window at the backe of the portch; and two windowes betweene the portch doore & the pulpitt; and the portch Doore, doth belong to Loughrigg, Ridall & Ambleside third, to be up houlden, mayntained & kept in repaire of their own proper Costs & charges for ever; and likewise their parte of the Church yard Wale, viz.: one yeat which doth extend ffrom the South nooke of the steple & ffrom thence southward to the east nooke of Gresmyre third; when it begines to be seated with in the church yard: of their owne costs & charges Now windowes belonging to Langdall Third be in number three; one window being in the east end of the church oppossigt Againe the east end of the north Alley & two windowes nexte Adjoyning to it upon the north side of the Church; to be upholden & mayntained & kept in good repaire of Langdall thirds owne proper costs charges and their parte of the church yard, walle from the north nooke of Gresmyre third; being seated within the church yard, to the south nooke of the steple, & likewise one yeate with A feeld opposight Against Robert Harrison Doore; to be keept in good repaire of their owne proper charges & costs of Langdall third without any deniall According to the true intent & meaning of these presents; Gresmyre windowes be in noumber three; upon the north side of the Church the lowest Towards the steple & the west doore doth belong to Gresmyre third; & these to be mayntained & keept in good repaire of gresmyre third own proper Costs &

Charges And the church-yard soe ffarr as it is seated within the church-yard with A pair of yeates & the roofe over the said yeattes of their owne proper costs & charges & note all repaireing the pulpitt church chest or any Bookes that doth concerning the church in any respects to be done At A generall Charge of the wholl parish be equall portions without any deniall & likewise the haske & joules at A general Charge of the parish and likewise A fonte At A generall charge to be maintained In Testamony thereof we the said eightenne have sette our honds the day & yeare ffirst above-written.

[The names of the Eighteen follow, under three headings of Gresmyre, Loughrigg, and Langdall. They are often crossed through and written again. On the other side of the MS. is given the following list.]

The names of the Eighteen of the parish of Grasmere as they now stand, April the 24th, 1688.

Grasmere	Langdale	Loughrigg and beneath Moss
Reignald Thompson	George Cooperthwaite	John Banks
John Haukrigg	Christopher Dawson	Reignald Brathwaite
John Hird	James Dixon	
John Haukrigg	John Middlefell	Hendry Barrow
Robert Harrisin	William Satterthwaite	Thomas Benson
Edwin Green	Leonard Benson	Thomas Newton
		Thomas Mackereth

Something has already been said of the constitution of the parish, and of the lay control which existed over its finances—the three townships within the parish being represented by a body of eighteen (six for each) as well as by two churchwardens ; and this document, while it strengthens the suggestion that the great addition to the church had been carried out by the united parish, and at the expense of the three townships—shows us exactly how each township arranged to fulfil its obligation to maintain the building in proper repair.

It was an intricate matter. Each township by a common agreement made itself responsible for the maintenance of a particular portion of the church, not only

of the fittings, but of the walls and windows of the fabric, as well as of the garth outside, with the garth wall down to its own particular gate of entrance.* There were besides general charges, along with the expenses of the Sunday worship, in which all took an equal share. Such an undertaking—both joint and individual—may seem to a merely modern mind a complicated business, especially as the church consisted structurally of two parts, which had to be divided for purposes of finance into three. But such problems were as nothing to men whose farm-holds belonged to a township (indivisible in itself) that was broken up into several lordships, and whose land—though permanent in quantity—was every year freshly apportioned within the common fields of his *vill*. The subsequent accounts of the churchwardens, of which a few have already been given, prove that the obligations incurred by this document were rigidly fulfilled.

The division of the fabric amongst the townships was made on the following lines. The care of the chancel, with its four windows and door, fell, of course, to the recipient of the tithes—who at this time was the rector. The township of Grasmere undertook to repair the south wall of the church from the chancel door to the tower, and half the aisle. The benches between this wall and aisle were all apportioned to the folk of the township, as well as a few odd ones in other parts of the church. The windows for which Grasmere was responsible were not, as would naturally be supposed, those of the south wall, but three in the north wall nearest to the east.

Langdale's share was wholly on the north side. Between the north wall, which it was bound to repair, and the aisle, stood the forms on which the folk of that valley were seated. The windows specially apportioned

* The churchyard wall at Milburn, Westmorland, is still divided for purposes of repair amongst certain inhabitants and property-owners, who speak of their share as *dolts* (Old Norse *deild*, a share, from *deila*, to divide). *Transactions*, Cumberland and Westmorland Antiquarian Society, vol. 9, p. 297.

to its care were the one in the east wall of the northern half of the church (whose precincts were called the Langdale choir) with the two in the north wall next to it.

Rydal and Loughrigg (in which township Ambleside above Stock was joined for church matters) was responsible for the three windows in Grasmere's south wall and for the porch. The forms for this portion of the parish were apparently set in the middle of the church, on either side the central arched wall.

The churchyard wall also was divided among the townships: Grasmere taking the north-eastern portion, with the lych gates; Langdale the stretch onward to the tower, with its own gate (now closed), which was opposite Church Stile, or Kirk Steel, then an inn; and Rydal and Loughrigg the stretch beyond to the south, past the present gate, which was reserved at that time for the folk of the township.

Each township had clearly its own quarter of the churchyard as well of the church, wherein to bury its dead. Within, the portions were marked by the position of each township's seats, and without, by the gates. The field apportioned to Langdale, by Harrison's inn, was no doubt used for the tethering of horses from that distant valley.

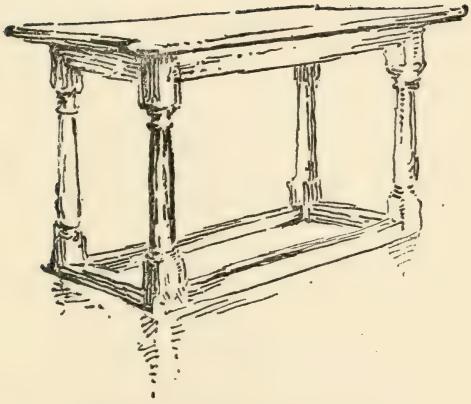
The three townships jointly attended to the upkeep of the tower, the bells, the roof of the church, the pulpit, and church furniture.

When the regulations for church repairs were thus solemnly written out, there was urgent need for them. Neglect and ill-usage had reduced the fabric to a forlorn state, and the accounts of the wardens (who, however, went cautiously to work on renovation) show what was immediately required for setting the place in decent order and reinstituting the services and sacraments of the established church. From the sum paid to the

" glasser "—6s., for glazing only Grasmere's share of the windows—it would seem that the winds of heaven had blown freely through the building. The font, which was always displaced by the Puritans, and often maltreated, required mending in the stone part as well as the lead; and a new cover was procured. A table-cloth—presumably of linen—was bought for 1s. 4d., a bottle (for the wine ?) for 3s., a surplice for 1s. 8d., and a pulpit cushion for 2s. 2d.

The binding of the Bible next year cost 1s. It had undoubtedly had hard wear during the diverse ministrations of the Interregnum. It may have been the very book bandied about on that Sunday of 1655 when John Banks and his attendant minister were defied by the clerk, and John, upon that official's persistence in reading aloud a chapter from its pages, forcibly closed it, and handed it to Mr. Turner. Also a Book of Common Prayer was got for 1s. 6d., a sum so small as to raise a doubt of its newness. The large sum of £1 1s. was expended on " makeing up ye raills in ye quire," which shows that this guard to the space about the communion table (often maliciously broken by zealots) was in a bad state. The rails were entirely renewed, and a fresh table made in 1755; and it is interesting to note that they were constructed on the spot by joiners brought from a distance, no doubt Kendal. The wood was procured in Rydal, at a cost of £4 12s., with carriage 2s. 6d. Other expenses, in iron-work, turning " bannisters," glue, &c., with the boarding of the men, came to £2 1s. 0½d. No doubt the existing rails are those then made, with the little table now used as a credence table.

An object within the chancel is older than these. It is a box carved with the date 1648 and the words " S. Oswaldus Poor Box." It is strange that this object should be acquired at a time when the country was at strife and the church disestablished—unless, indeed, it



Old Altar now used as a Credence Table

was the gift of a rich parishioner like Mr. Thomas Braithwaite of Ambleside Hall, who was elder of the parish during the rule of the Presbyterians.*

The placing of the King's Arms within the church was obligatory.† This was a costly business, for two men, who brought the painted panel, had to be boarded in the village. Some of the money went, however, in drink, and the occasion was evidently made an excuse for village jollity.

Gradually other articles customary in a properly-appointed church were acquired. A table-cloth—this time probably of cloth—was bought in 1665 at a cost of 16s. 7d., and " A cloth to Cover ye Ellements " at 2s. followed in 1672. The Communion vessels in use up to this time must have been of the rudest description, for those that replaced them in 1670 were of simple pewter, except the " dubler "—doubtless a plate for the collection of alms.

	li	s	d
Itt for A pewder dubler & pewder cup & a london plater	00	4	6
Itt. for a wood dubler	00	00	3

The accounts show no further expenditure on this score, except for the repair of a " Flagon " (3d.) in 1708, and for " Sodering ye Tankers " in 1726. The existing plate was supplied by private piety, as its inscriptions tell. The two silver cups bear the date 1714, and they are of the same pattern ; but one carries the cross with sacred monogram and the legend " The Parish Church Plate of Grasmere Renewed Ao. Doi. 1714 " (having been probably bought from the proceeds of the sale of the older plate or by collected offerings), while the other with a coat of arms inside its border, bears the inscription :

* The family employed carvers about this time for their houses and elaborate mantelpieces.

† This was removed from Baisbrowne, and is now at Water Park, Coniston.

" The gift of Mrs. Dorothy Benson of Coat How to the Parish Church of Grasmere Ao. Doi. 1714." This lady, wife of Thomas Benson, freeholder, of the homestead by the Rothay, gave also a beautiful old silver alms dish, said to be a piece of Dublin plate.* The date on this is 1729. She gave a silver paten also, on which only the maker's date (1731-2) is engraved. It is singular that each of the three pieces displays a different coat-of-arms.†

Mrs. Benson's munificence was clearly felt by the parish, for the item in the accounts of 1729 " For Wine given as a Present to Mrs. Benson," 8s., must have been intended as an acknowledgment.

Another offering of plate was made much later (1852) by Mrs. Letitia Lough, a friend of the Wordworths, who resided for some time at Fox Ghyll, and later removed to Grasmere.

In connection with the Communion vessels of the Restoration period, it must be borne in mind that there was far less use for them then than now. The sacrament was at that time administered only four times in the year. This fact is not only shown by the accounts of the Rydal Hall agent and of the churchwardens, but it is expressly declared by one of the answers made by the wardens at the Presentment of 1723. They add that they provide fine white bread and good wine for the sacrament " att ye charges of ye Inhabitants " ; and four years later they append to this statement " Easter excepted, which is at the Charge of the Parson."

Thus on three occasions—Christmas, Whitsuntide, and Michaelmas—the churchwardens and the Eighteen were bound to provide bread and wine ; ‡ while the expenses

* Old church plate of the Diocese of Carlisle.

† See Fullers and Freeholders.

‡ Is it possible that this custom may be referred to the ancient one of the Anglo-Saxon race which thrice in the year enforced the attendance of the markmen, unbidden, at a great religious rite, for which the sacrifices were provided at the cost of the whole district ? See Kemble's *Saxons in England.*

of the Easter celebration were borne by the rector, who received the Easter dues. When the tithes were leased to laymen, this layman took over the charge. And as Squire John Fleming held the tithes, items for this expenditure are found in Tyson's and Harrison's account-books.

In 1632 6½ gallons of wine were procured "against Easter" for Grasmere church, at a cost of 13s.; and the Easter bread (fine wheaten bread as has been said, much relished by people whose staple food was oatmeal), with the charge for procuring it, amounted to 10d. In 1643 8 gallons were got in for the same purpose, costing £1 1s. 8d.; and next year 9 gallons, at £1 4s.—that is to say, some 4½ dozen bottles of our present size were drunk on this occasion. The wine cost 4d. to 5½d. a bottle.

The amount of wine drunk by the parishioners seems large, even when we remember that the whole of the adult population in the three townships were bound to attend, and did attend these solemn functions. Of this there is proof, for every non-communicant was taxed, as existing Subsidy Rolls show. It is probable that when receiving the wine, the parishioner took a hearty drink from the cup, and not a sip as at present.*

The churchwardens' accounts for bread and wine at the three communions are accurately recorded after the Restoration, as well as their expenses for the journey required to procure them—the ride to Kendal being charged as 8d., or if only to Ambleside 4d. Unluckily,

* About 1634 George Methwen, curate of Bamburgh, was summoned before the Court of High Commission for drunkenness and other misdemeanors. In the evidence this appears: "At Easter gone twelve monethes at Easter last, examinate (the witness) did receive the Holie Communion, and Methwen, when he did distribute the wine, did holde the same in his owne hand and would not deliver it into examinate's handes for to drinke, as he thinketh he ought to have done; for examinate in regard to his holdinge on it in that manner, could scarcelie taste of the wine. Methwen did serve some others at that time in the like manner, whoe tooke offence thereat."—*History of Northumberland.*

It is possible, of course, that not all the wine was drunk, but passed to an official as a perquisite. See Cox's *Parish Registers of England*, p. 227.

however, only the sum expended is given, and not the amount of wine. In 1666 the three sacraments cost the parish 9s. 9d., 9s. 3d., and 9d. 3d. respectively; in 1668, 6s. 11d., 8s. 3d., and 8s. 3d.; in 1669, 10s. 3d., 10s. 3d., and 7s. 9d. From 1681 the accounts kept separately for Grasmere and for Loughrigg with Rydal each show an expenditure for bread and wine; but the Langdale division, which had now acquired the privilege of a Communion in its own chapel once a year, was apparently let off. The expenses for that year were set down as £1 13s. 3d.; Grasmere paying £1 0s. 1d. and Loughrigg and Rydal 13s. 2d.; the division being based probably upon the number of communicants in each township. In 1691 the total expenditure was £2 6s. 6d., and it remained at much this figure till 1729. The charge from that time became a fixed one, Grasmere paying 7s. 2d., 6s. 6d., and 7s. 2d. for the Christmas, Whitsuntide, and Michaelmas celebrations (which included two journeys); and Loughrigg and Rydal, 4s. 4d., 5s., and 4s. 4d. (one journey), and it remained at these figures till 1821, when there was a change of rectors. From this date the charge was exceedingly irregular, figuring occasionally as high as £2 7s. 10d., while sometimes it does not appear at all, the bread only being accounted for. Then it dropped greatly. From 1833 Loughrigg and Rydal ceased to pay—in consideration, no doubt, of the celebrations held in the new chapel in Rydal; and Grasmere figured at a sum under £1, or not at all! By a new arrangement in 1842 Loughrigg and Rydal recommenced its contribution, though on a new basis of irregular payments; and this continued until the break-up of the old order in 1857, when it joined for the last time at the sacramental bread and wine provided at the old parish church, paying 4s. 9d., while Grasmere paid 14s. 3d.

It may be of interest to note that with the new order and the new rector (who kept a book in which he entered

particulars of the communicants) the bread and wine for Grasmere alone cost £2 5s. 9d. When, in 1860, it rose to £4 10s., the sum included 8s. paid by the rector to the wardens in place of his Easter provision. This ancient rectorial charge is mentioned for the last time in 1865. It was probably coincident also with the appointment of the Rev. Fletcher Fleming, that the old order of sacraments four times in the year was changed to a monthly celebration.

The following extracts from the accounts, besides others interspersed in the text, show that the townships carried out their separate obligations until the Vestry revolution of 1856-7, a period of almost 200 years. They apparently gave out their share of the work to their own townsmen. John Birkett, who received 1s. for a "yeat stoop," in 1755, for the Loughrigg and Beneath Moss Gate, was a Rydal man. The ale charged 1s. 8d. in the public auction, when that township let the contract for the repair of its benches in 1783, was doubtless drunk at the Fleming's Inn in Rydal, where such scenes were frequent.

1667 to John Hawkrigg for mending gresmyr-yeat 1s 4d

1668 for glassing one window for gresmyr 3s 6d

1669 It. to Milles Mackereth for a Gammer & Crake & loupp to gresmyre Church yeats 1s 9d.

1670 for mending sliper of our Church yeats 1d

1678 For langdall yeat & laughrigg yeat for Irron-worke 6d; also "for mending Churchyard wale for laughrigg third" 1s 6d.

1680 Loughrigg and beneath Moss repaire "our window" 1s od

1683 Grasmere repairs windows, 8d., "yeats" 1s. od., and Lou. & b. M. the "Church wals" 10.

1730 Lou. and b. M. makes a new gate 16s 6d.

1751 Langdale makes a new gate 10s 7d

1755 Lou. and b. M. makes new gate 8s od. and mends wall 4s 4d

1759 Grasmere and Langdale repair their walls

1761 Grasmere mends gates 1s 10d.; while mending of the church porch, 4s 6d is entered in general charges

1768 Grasmere "glasses" windows 9s 6d

1769 All three gates are repaired, and Grasmere mends her windows

1773 Loughrigg and beneath Moss makes new gates and stulps 11s 11d, also repairs wall 10s od, Langdale does the latter 7s 6d

1775 Grasmere sells old gates for 4s od

1776 Lou. and b. M. works on wall £3 5s od

1777 Grasmere collects material for wall 19s 4d. Langdale makes new gate 9s od

1780 Grasmere raises wall from the school-house to where it meets "Rydal third" £1 17s 3d. All the townships repair their windows

1782 Lou. and b. M. again repairs wall, evidently with thoroughness, giving 1s od in ale to the men who work the foundation in water (of the river). The leading of stones for 5 days with 2 horses cost £1 os od. Total £2 3s 6d

1790 Langdale pays "for new stoops for Langdale gate & hanging" 4s 3d while all three townships mend windows—Grasmere for its "third" 6s 10d, Langdale 10½d, and Lou. and b. M. 1s 6½d

1799 Lou. and b. M. pays "To mending Rydale Gates" 1s od

1806 Lou. and b. M. pays £1 5s 6d for a new gate, to Edward Wilson of Grasmere

1811 Lou. and b. M. repairs "Church Garth Wall" £1 11s 9d; and gate 2s 6d, to John Watson, smith, of Grasmere

1819 Lou. and b. M. repairs wall, 15s od; and windows 15s 3d

1822 Lou. and b. M. mends and paints church gates 6s 4d

1832 Lou. and b. M. glazes windows 1s 9d

1835 Lou. and b. M. pays for new gate £1 os od

1840 Lou. and b. M. repairs windows 5s 1½d

1842 Langdale pays 9s od to Edward Wilson for new gate

1852 Lou. and b. M. repairs wall 7s 10d ; and mends and paints gate 4s 3d

1856 The three townships repair separately for the last time : Grasmere painting gate and windows at 7s 6d ; " Rydall and Loughrigg " (now styled) painting her gate at 2s od and Langdale hers at 1s 6d

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[The churchwardens' accounts are in 3 volumes :

The 2nd volume of these is missing, but there is a copy. This copy begins in 1732, overlapping by three years the first volume, which ends in 1735 ; but the copy of the 2nd volume only goes as far as 1782, and the 3rd volume begins in 1790, leaving a gap of eight years.]—Ed.

CLEANING AND REPAIRS

THE townships joined at many general repairs, as well as at the cleaning of the church, and the expenses of maintaining worship within it. It is interesting to note how extremely small these expenses were. The cleaning, or "dressing," as it was called, of the church, the greasing of the bells, the washing of the linen, the writing of the register, the whipping of dogs out of church, and the "drawing" of the accounts, all appear to have been paid for at the Restoration at the rate of 1s. each per annum. This moderate fee was presently raised to 1s. 6d., 2s. 6d., 3s., or 3s. 6d., but never rose higher for over a hundred years. The "surpcloth and table-cloth" were washed twice in the year 1662 for 1s., but from 1664 onward three times were allowed for 3s., and by 1702 the laundress had secured an additional 6d. for mending. The cleaning of the windows "and sentences" (which were presumably touched up with paint) became a regular charge at 1s., and the burnishing of the church plate was 6d.

But there were other expenses, belonging to the general charge, which, being irregular but frequently recurrent, were troublesome to the wardens and Eighteen, whose business it was to lay such a rate annually on the inhabitants of the parish as should cover the outlay. Such was the repair of the church roof, which was often needed; even the moss (which it was the custom to stuff within the rigging to arrest and absorb the wet which ran down from the ill-fitting slates) required frequent replenishing. Accordingly, after sundry payments made for "mossing church" or "mending slates," the Eighteen entered into

a contract, in 1686, with two Grasmere wallers for the upkeep of the whole of the church roof, except the choir, for nine years, for the sum of 7s. 6d. a year. In 1704 one William Grigg obtained the contract for three years at the same rate, and undertook to keep the roof in a sound state " as to Slatt and Moss (excepting upon extraordinary Storms whereby the roof shall suffer much Damage which shall be referred to the Eighteen the Easter following)." Grigg, however, made no bad-weather demands, and it was only in 1714, a year after the contract had been transferred to Edward Hird, that " a violent storme " caused the spending of 18s. beyond the stipulated 7s. 6d. The parson and Eighteen then (1715) transferred the contract to Stephen Haukrigge. The sum was perhaps too small, for in 1718 John Warriner secured 8s. 6d. on the contract. " An extraordinary Storme " in 1719 cost only an extra 3s. The contract, which afterwards rose to 11s. 6d., had ceased by 1732, and odd sums for repair occur from time to time, such as 13s. in 1733 and the same in 1734, with 3s. 3d. for slates and carriage. But little was apparently done, and by 1809 the roof seems to have been in a bad condition, for the ominous item occurs " To cleaning Snow out of Church 2s. 0d." It was radically repaired in 1814, when £37 1s. 11d. was spent on the slates, £11 on timber, which was paid to Lady Fleming, the wood being doubtless felled in Bainriggs, and the extraordinary sum of £1 13s. 6d. on ale to the workmen and " letting " the contract.

The Bells.

Grasmere's pleasant chime of three bells is undoubtedly an old one. The metal of the existing bells that sends its resonance through the vale may be that of the first bells, though robbed of antique inscription or mark by recasting. It is quite possible that at the Restoration

there still hung in the tower the Pre-Reformation triad, stamped with an invocation to some saint in Longobardic characters or with a quaint inscription in Black Letter; for the Rev. H. Whitehead discovered in Cumberland many an ancient bell that had escaped confiscation and the melting-pot in the dark days of Henry VIII.'s ruthless robberies and his successor's drastic commission.*

They were then, however, in a bad state, and the churchwardens immediately proceeded to have them set in order, as the accounts show.

It is clear from the items that one of the wardens, Michael Knott, rode to Cockermouth in search of a bell-founder, and that one was procured whose name was John Langsha; also that he came over to Grasmere and did the work there.

Now Mr. Whitehead considered that there was no bell-foundry in Cockermouth at this date. When its three bells were recast in 1673-4 the expenses of the bell-founders' journey were paid, and they apparently dug a pit in the churchyard and cast the great bell there.† Such a method was resorted to when the remoteness of the church or the badness of the roads made the carriage of the bells a difficulty.‡

Who, then, was John Langsha? Until more evidence is forthcoming we must suppose him to have been an itinerant founder. He or the firm he worked for may have had head-quarters in some town of Cumberland, and travelled thence to wherever they were called. According to Mr. Whitehead, there was a bell-foundry of some repute at Penrith in the seventeenth century. The account books do not show how this renovation of the Grasmere bells was paid for. The wardens paid

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* 7 Ed. VI., 1553. See *Transactions*, Cumberland and Westmorland Antiquarian Society, vols. 6 and 14.

† *Church Bells of Cockermouth. Translations*, vol. 14, p. 295.

‡ *Bells of England*, J. J. Raven, p. 190.

John his "earnest," and a small item that remained after he left; otherwise the only sum of consequence that appears is 9s. for two new bell-ropes.

Only casual expenses in connection with the bells are given after this for some time. For instance, in 1669 the item occurs, "in drinke when we did turne midlmost bell," 2s. 6d. But the presentment of 1707 certainly discloses the serious condition of one bell, which was then cracked; and the reliance of the wardens on the "discretion" of their rector was misplaced, as nothing was done. There would seem to have been no good founder at this time in the adjacent counties; for when the bells of Brigham were renewed in 1711, under the incumbency of Roger Fleming (another son of Sir Daniel), a Gloucester firm of founders was actually called to the rescue. The bells, however, went no further than Kendal, where there was, adjacent to the church, a bell-house which could be hired, and there the Gloucester man superintended the casting of them.*

At Grasmere, procrastination prevailed. The wardens, in 1723, admitted "The Bells are not firme & in good order, but they are agreed to make them good as soon as possible." In 1727 they again admitted the bells to be out of order, but the ropes (it was declared) were "good & firm." In 1729 the bells still waited to be repaired "upon a convenient opportunity." In 1731

* "Church Bells of Brigham," *Transactions*, Cumberland and Westmorland Antiquarian Society, vol. 14, p. 283. It seems strange that there was no reliable bell-founder in Kendal, where, in the seventeenth century, there was a goodly number of workers in metal. (See *Boke off Recorde.*) Of these the Washingtons were apparently the most accredited workmen. A Richard of the name "besydes Kendal" at the Dissolution, bought the house of the Friars in Penrith, with its bell. (*Transactions*, Cumberland and Westmorland Antiquarian Society, vol. 6, p. 435.) The Richard of the next century was busy with arms during the Civil Wars, and worked for Rydal Hall. Mr. R. Godfrey ("Westmorland Bells," *Transactions*, Cumberland and Westmorland Antiquarian Society, vol. 6, p. 84) considers that the Crosthwaite bell, dated 1695, was cast by Christopher Hodson in Kendal. In the preceding century one of this name (spelt Hodgson) appears among the freemen of the city, while a John and a Robert stand in the later list of freemen armourers and hardwaremen, though the mark for "foreigner" stands after their names.

the great plunge into expense was at last taken. "One of our bells is in good order, The Other two are recasting at York & the ropes are making, & everything hastning forwards to have them in good order." Accordingly, the accounts for 1732 show the enormous outlay incurred of £40 3s. 9½d., and next year of £49 3s. "Towards Casting the Bells and other Charges;" besides £3 14s. 5d. for "Charges for a Ringing loft."

It is of interest to note that the Grasmere folk, in their bell troubles, returned to their old ecclesiastical centre at York, whence their first bells would come, and where there were good founders. The inscriptions on the two largest bells, in an ornamental border running round the crown, are as follows:—

GLORIA IN ALTISSIMIS DEO 1731

ED HIRD JOH WILSON GEO
HE HIRD WIL RIGG MACKERETH

CHURCH E Seller
WARDENS Ebor

in. dia.
SOLI DEO GLORIA 1731 E Seller
Ebor

Each bell carries besides on the waist below the founder's name, the arms and crest of the Flemings of Rydal. Arms: *Gules, a fret, argent.* Crest: *A serpent nowed, holding a garland of olives and vines in his mouth, all proper.* Motto: PAX, COPIA, SAPIENTIA, on a shield 5¼ by 3¾ inches.

Arms of the Le Fleming Family, on the Great & Middle Bells.

Information about our bell-founder may be found in Mr.

J. E. Poppleton's *Bells in the West Riding of Yorkshire*.* At the Restoration, and for nearly a century afterwards, a firm of Sellers worked at a foundry in Jubbergate, York. William, the first known of the family, founded a bell which yet hangs in Eskdale Church, Cumberland. Edward, who followed, died in 1724, and was succeeded by his son, the founder of the Grasmere bells. The second Edward used the same signatory mark as his father, and it was the custom of both to give, after the Latin inscription—and provided there was no donor—the names of the rector and churchwardens who were in office at the time of the founding. The Fleming coat-of-arms undoubtedly stands for Dr. George Fleming, then rector.

A catastrophe is disclosed by the presentment of 1798, when the "least bell" was "burst and unringable." It remained in this condition for eleven years, when a private individual came to the rescue. Its inscription runs :—

COPIA PAX SAPIENTIA Re-cast at the expence of Mrs. Dorothy Knott 1809 T MEARS & Son of London

Dorothy Knott was probably daughter of John Knott, of the Howe in Applethwaite, born 1728, and of the family who removed from Grasmere to Rydal.† From her benefaction to the school, we learn that she lived in Ambleside, where spinster ladies of means were wont to settle.

The firm of Mears, who cast the bell, worked at the noted old foundry in Whitechapel.‡ If this bell went to London, its journey was a long one. But the turnpike roads were now made, which must have facilitated

* *Yorkshire Arch. Journal*, vols. 16, 17, and 18.

† For the Knott family, see "A Westmorland Township," *Westmorland Gazette*, May 7th, 1810.

‡ Raven's *Bells of England*, pp. 212-16.

carriage, and the bell would arrive by what is now the Wishing Gate road. An old man living in Grasmere in 1886 used to tell of his grandmother, who remembered the church bells having been brought by sledge over the top of White Moss, then the only road into the valley.* These must have been Seller's bells, for it is just possible for three generations to bridge the 155 years; and this traditional touch helps us to realize the remoteness of the valley in those days, which no wheeled traffic could reach.

When odd work was done in the belfry in 1775, a letter from the bell-founder cost 5d. for porterage.

Casual repairs continued to be done in the place.

John Watson, the smith of Winterseeds, tinkered the bells in 1807; and three years after, when the little bell had arrived from London, the two others were also down, for he was paid £3 14s. 8d. for repairing them, and John Hartley received the considerable sum of £11 14s. 6d. for hanging them. In 1764 bell-wheels and clappers were repaired. The head-stocking of the great bell and two bell-clappers, in 1767, cost £3 7s. 9d. Again, in 1773, 1774, and 1775, head-stocks, clappers, and repairs to ringing-loft cost about £1. The ropes in 1769 cost 7s. 4½d.

Great Bell and Hammer

It is clear that Sabbath bell-ringing was for long one of those boon services which the Grasmere parishioner gave willingly to his church. Ringing on Gunpowder Plot day, and some occasions of national rejoicing and sorrow were paid for; but until 1692 nothing is put down

* W. Wilson's "Former Social Life in Cumberland and Westmorland," *Transactions*, Cumberland and Westmorland Antiquarian Society, 1886.

in the accounts for ringing, only a small item for grease for the bells. In that year, however, the Eighteen entered into a contract with the clerk, who was to procure men to ring on Sundays and Holy Days, and to furnish the necessary grease, at the rate of 10s. a year. Next year, on its renewal with Thomas Knott, the sum was dropped to 8s. 6d. "and what more as the Eighteen shall think fit." However, the new clerk, Robert Harrison, in 1695 secured 10s., and at this figure it remained for some fifty years. After a gap of eight years in the accounts, the item reappears in 1751 at £1, and from that time onwards it fluctuates between the sums of 10s., 13s. 4d., £1, even once in 1759 touching £1 10s., as the Eighteen were parsimoniously or liberally inclined. Finally, after a halt at 15s., it rose in 1794 to £1 1s., and from that slowly mounted until by 1814 it had reached £2 15s. 6d., at which it remained for eleven years. From 1826 it rose again, and between 1831 and 1858 it stood at £3 6s. £1 was then added.

The tower was an irregular source of expense, as the following items show :—

1665 the makeing of ye steple door 3s 6d

1694 For mending the Garret : Flags 6d

1697 Lime for church and steeple £1 17s 1d ; this item includes "charge for Bargaining." "For sand" 3s od. "For Rough-Casting the steeple" £4 os od

1717 For repairing the Steeple loft and two Doors 02 : 14 : 00

1718 Edwin Green, one of the Eighteen, is paid 4s od "for attending when the steeple was repaired."

1734 For a lock to ye Steeple door 8d

Work was done on the steeple and steeple window in 1757 ; and in 1767 a load of "slape" cost 1s. and lime 2s. 6d. The work of white-washing recurred frequently. Church and steeple were entirely rough-cast in 1773,

at the considerable cost of £13,* the east window (presumably of the north aisle) being at the same time repaired. The interior was done in 1780 for £1 5s. 6d., and the exterior both of church and steeple in 1791—which with the pointing of the windows came to £3 15s. The townships repaired their individual windows next year, this being repeated more radically in 1801.

The years 1803 and 1804 show that drastic work was done. One item stands " To expenses of Letting whitewashing the Church 8s. 0d."—a sum spent mainly of course in copious draughts of ale. Another is " To writing Contracts of Letting 1s. 6d." The amount actually paid for " mending Roof of Church, and Whitewashing Church in and Out, and Pinning up all Broken places in the Ruff Cast & Plaster," was £8 12s.—certainly a modest one. Church and tower were whitewashed in 1815 for £5 18s., and Edward Wilson, carpenter, received 18s. for a " Craddle to White Wash Steeple." The process was repeated in 1832 at a cost of £2 17s. 7½d., and again in 1842, when Levi Hodgson was paid £4 15s. 9d. for the work.

The scraping, smoothing, and daubing to which the church was constantly subjected, may account for the mutilated state of such bits of freestone (shallow mouldings, &c.)as are yet visible. In what year Addison's decorations were effaced by a coat of whitewash is not known. It is supposed that the black boards, painted with texts, which yet hang in the church, replaced them, as being more convenient for the whitewashers. If so, the once admired art of the painter was allowed little more than fifty years in which to delight and instruct the people ; for one board gives, with the names of the churchwardens, the date 1741. It is singular that in that year the accounts show no unwonted expense.

* The tower and all the body of the church was rough-cast in 1910 at a cost of £200 5s. 1d.—Ed.

An item that occurred from time to time for " mending sentences " was changed in 1763 to an annual charge of 1s. for " cleaning church windows and sentences."

Many little odd expenses there were: such as the " hack " or pick, which, from its constant work on the graves, often wanted " laying," or a new shaft, at 3d. A fresh one and a " Cald-rake " were bought in 1715 for 1s. 6d.; while in 1802 " laying Mattock " cost 1s. 9d., and " New Coolrake " 1s. 6d. In 1824 a new spade cost 3s. 9d. Occasionally the church chest wanted " gimmers " or hinges, or new locks, a pair of which cost, in 1752, 1s. 4d. An " iron chest " was bought in 1816 for £7 17s. 6d. The ladder was mended often, and a new one in 1734 cost 9s. The " Corps Cloth," procured before 1798, when it was mended at 4d., required " Dying and Pressing " in 1803 at 3s. 3d.; and it was renewed in 1823 for £2 15s. A new bier cost, in 1812, 11s. 6d. In 1821 a small hearse was built by Edward Wilson, which could travel on the improved, but still narrow roads of the parish. Its use was paid for; but in some years it was not had out at all, so—as its initial cost was £14 9s., and the clerk was paid presently 5s. a year for attending it, and a " Hearse House " was soon found necessary (£11 15s.)—it was not a paying affair.

Edward repaired the " Corpes Stool " for 2s. in 1847.

" A booke of Canons " was bought in 1665 at 3s. 3d.; a register book in 1685 at 11s., and again in 1784 at 8s.; a book of articles in 1691 at 1s.; and in 1692 " a Paper Booke for Registring ye poor " at 2s. 9d., as well as an Act of Parliament " for Setling ye Poor " at 3d.

But besides regular and casual expenses ever increasing, there were special acquisitions too costly to be dealt with in the ordinary yearly accounts. Such was the church plate, and the bells (as we have seen), and, presumably, the clock, which at an unknown date replaced the dial. The present clock was, according to the terrier,

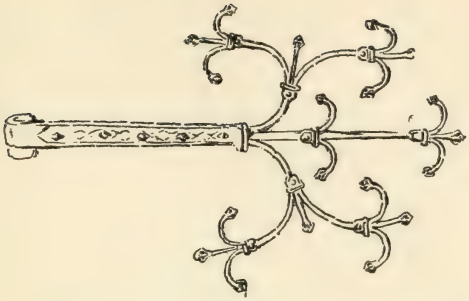
presented in 1817, and was supplied by a Mr. Bellman, of Broughton-in-Furness. The bill of 7s. 6d., paid to "Late Mr. Bellman for dressing church clock," was not entered until 1820, though the previous year the regular charge started "To John Watson for attending clock & keeping water from it," which was £1 3s. 6d. for that year and afterwards 2s. 6d. less. The old clock existed till recently.

The church porch, like the tower, was repaired at the general charge. This, in 1761, cost only 4s. 6d. The outer doors of the porch were renewed in 1821. Edward Wilson contracted for the wood-work for £5, while John Watson executed the iron-work for £3 5s. 8d.

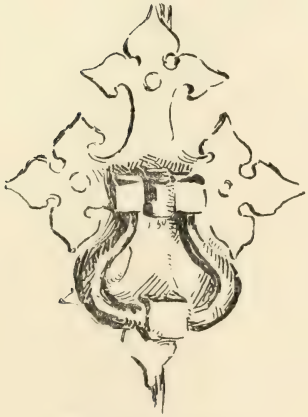
Work on Inner Door.

The priest's door was renewed also, being doubtless paid for by the rector. These doors remain, and the initials of the Winterseeds smith, which he stamped upon his work, may be seen.

At the opening of the nineteenth century the condition of the church floor and of the antique forms had become a matter for serious consideration. Nothing effectual, however, could be done in the way of levelling and paving until the custom of burying within the church had ceased. Even then there was reluctance and difficulty, for the soil was full of bones, and so close to the surface did these lie, that, according to tradition, many were gathered and laid elsewhere, when the alteration finally was made.



Hinges of the Outer Door of the Porch.



Door Handle in the Porch.

This was radically undertaken in 1840. The floor, which until then was below the level of the ground outside, was filled in and paved. The old benches were removed, and pews set up in their place. Foreign timber—deal painted—was for the first time used instead of native oak, and the wood-work was given to an Ambleside man. The cost of the renovation, which included repairs to roof and renewal of windows, amounted to £300, and this was raised by subscription—Queen Adelaide (who was visiting the district) contributing £50.

The abolition of the forms could not do other than tend to the breaking up of old customs. The pews were no doubt apportioned to the various households, in Grasmere township at least; while the question of the rightful share possessed by the sister townships in this altered accommodation was left open, as the events of 1856 show (see Church Rates). With household pews, men and women sat together. The western door, hitherto used by the men, and outside which (according to tradition) all secular notices had been given out, was now made up. £1 1s. had been paid, as late as 1816, "To John Watson for Hanging of Men's Door." At the same time the tower-arch was walled up, and the tower used for a vestry—the old wooden one being cleared away. The font was brought into the church. The expenses of the old vestry fire, which had risen to 5s., cease accordingly, and those of lighting the "stove"—placed presumably in the church itself—begin at 12s. a year. Comfort was now thought of. Straw matting had indeed been procured for the communion rail in 1780 (3s. 1d.); it was bought in 1844 for 11s. 4d.

The era of subscriptions raised the rate of church expenses enormously, as has been seen in the 1840 renovation. In 1876 the rough-casting of the church outside was done by subscription, and contracted for at £30; £70 13s. 0½d. being altogether expended upon that and

new spouts and painting clock, a sum which should be compared with the cost on previous occasions.

The Rev. E. Jefferies, who was the first rector—certainly after the days of Dr. Fleming—to take a zealous interest in the fabric, reconstructed in 1841 the entire east wall at his own expense.* He also presented the two carved chairs that stand within the sanctuary. He made with his own hands a communion-table † and footstools ; the latter remain.

Another great renovation was carried out in 1879-80 under Mr. Fletcher. Like the last, its cost was defrayed by offerings (£660), and much of the work done in 1840 was now undone. The deal pews were cleared away and the existing oak benches substituted — Grasmere workmen being employed. The tower arch was again opened out, and the font replaced. A vestry was partitioned off the north-east angle of the church, which was formerly known as the Langdale choir. New pulpit, font-cover, communion-table, and Litany-desk were provided in 1884, and five years later the lectern was given by Miss Agar, of Silverhow, in memory of her aunt. The alms-dishes that hang on the south wall were found a few years ago in the old tithe-barn, which has been turned into a parish-room.

Old Collecting Plate with Handle.

* See Middleton's Guide.

† This table is now in use at a Mission room in Ulverston parish.

The Churchyard.

From the Restoration there is evidence that the garth outside the church was cared for. It was surrounded, as we have seen, with stout rough-cast walls, which were divided among the townships for upkeep. The space within them was not strictly divided, yet the older graves show that there was an inclination for each township to lay its dead adjacent to its own gateway and stretch of wall. The keeping in order of the grassy space, with its ever-increasing mounds, fell to the general charge. An item stands in 1673, " For dresing weeds out of ye Church yard," 1s. 6d. ; and a charge becomes frequent for " repairing church-yard walks, 4s. 6d.," or " cleaning church-yard," 2s. 6d. Three days at this in 1631 cost 6s. 9d.

Grasmere township paid in 1661 " For our P't of the Dyell " 1s. This must have proved an unsatisfactory time-teller, as in 1683 4s. was paid " For a diall & post." A post alone cost, in 1732, 1s. 9d., and again in 1743 a new dial-post was fixed at 3s. 9d.

Trees were planted from time to time. Young ashes were set in 1684 at a cost of 1s. 6d. The yew tree, though no longer needed for the bow, was still grown. A fresh one, planted in 1706, at a cost of 1s., perhaps took the place of the old one blown down in the gale of December 18th, 1687.* This, too, which would now have numbered over 200 years, appears to have gone. The existing trees were planted in 1819 through the instrumentality of the poet Wordsworth (from a sum supplied by his friend, Sir George Beaumont), and he continued to care for them.

* December 18th, 1687 : " There hath been three very great Windes lately viz. Nov. 10, 87. at night, Dec. 3, 87. at night, and yester-night and all this day which was ye worst, & which hath blowne down ye great Ewe-tree in Gresmere Church Yard, the very tall Firr Tree at Ambleside, & many trees in Rydal Demesne, etc. It was accompanied with much snow."—Sir D. F.'s Account Book.

The poet himself lies beneath their shade. Of the countless graves that stud this ancient burying-place, it is his that draws the pilgrims from afar ; and the yard, encircled by its yews and the great mountains, has perhaps inspired more and better poetry than any other plot in England. Hartley Coleridge, Sir John Richardson, Green and Hull the artists, are buried here, and their graves may be found by referring to the short Guide issued by Mr. Peterson.

Wordsworth's monument, a medallion by Woolner, is within the church. The beautiful inscription is a translation of Keble's Latin dedication of his Oxford Lectures on Poetry to Wordsworth.

EXTRACTS FROM CHURCHWARDENS' ACCOUNTS AND PRESENTMENTS

GRESMYRE.

The First day of Apprill in the XIIIJth of the Kings Ma'tyes Reigne A treue & A P'fect Acount of ye Disbursment of James Benson & Robert Watson Church Wardens For the yeare last past.

	li	s	d
Anno Domini 1661 as Followeth			
Imprimus for mending & mossing the Church ..	00	07	04
Ittem for mending the Font stone..	00	02	08
Ittem for the Font Couer *	00	02	08
Ittem soldering the lead in the Font stone ..	00	00	06
Ittem For a Quission for the pulpitt	00	02	02
Ittem For A table cloth	00	01	04
Ittem For A Raill at the pullpit side	00	00	10
Ittem For our p't of the Dyell	00	01	00
Ittem For mending the great bell Leather ..	00	00	02
Ittem For our p'te of A surp cloth we bought ..	00	01	08
Ittem For Drissing the Church	00	00	04
Ittem For greace to ye bells For our p'te ..	00	00	04
Ittem For Lime for ye windowes & Fireing for glasser	00	00	04
Ittem payed to ye glasser for mending our p'te of windowes	00	06	00
Ittem For A new botle to the Church	00	03	00
Ittem payed For bread and wine	00	08	04
Ittem payed to John Jackson for lying 2 graues	00	00	04
Ittem For writting this yeare	00	00	04
Ittem for Two Journeyes to Ambleside	00	00	08
	li	s	d
The sume totall ..	02	09	0

* The old font cover (see engraving) is lost.

Two churchwardens sign by a mark at the bottom. This is clearly an account for Grasmere township alone.

GRESMYRE.

A Booke For the whole p'rish Concerning the Church Affaires, For the Churchwardens to writte their Accounts, euery yeare & to subscribe their names to the same mad The 23th day of Apprill 1662.

Church wardens For this present year.

Gresmyre	Michaell Knott	Langdell	James Harrison
	Willm Watson		John Harrison
Laughrigg	Ridell Amblesid'	Thomas Partrigge	
		Thomas Braythwaitt	

	li	s	d
Imprimis for our Journey to Kendal to be sworne	00	06	00
Ittem for paper	00	00	03
Ittem for dresing of ye Church	00	01	00
Ittem for binding ye Church bible..	00	01	00
Ittem for ye bell Founder John Langsha in earnest	00	05	00
Ittem for Ringing up on Cronoc'on Day ..	00	01	06
Ittem disbursed for ye Comon prayer book ..	00	10	06
Ittem for mending ye midle bell Ropp	00	01	00
Ittem to James Harrison for makeing ye sentences w'in ye church	00	01	00
Ittem to Michaell Knott for a Journey to cockermouth for bell founder	00	02	00
Ittem left behind unpayed when bell founder was at grismyre	00	01	06
Ittem for writting ye P'sentm't for ye whole p'rish	00	01	00
Itt for writting ye P'sentm't into 3 P'ts ..	00	01	00
Itt payed to ye Archbishopp men	01	09	06
Itt for Ringing upon gunpowder treason day ..	00	01	00
It for our Journey to ye lord Bishopp men ..	00	08	00
Ittem for setting up ye Kings armes & Charges in Drinke	00	16	06
A slott to ye west doore of gresmyre owne Charges	00	01	09
for bread & wine in owne Charges	00	09	08
for grease to ye belles	00	01	0
washing the surp cloth & table cloth twice in ye yeare	00	01	0
for makeing up ye raill in ye quire	01	01	0

Ittem for Driueing wedges in ye Frame of ye bells	00	00	03
Ittem for gammers for ye Raill doore	00	01	8
Itt. for setting Church (wardens ?) nome in ye Church	00	00	06
Itt for lyeing Flagges at Raill	00	00	03
Ittem for two new bell-roppes	00	09	00
Ittem for writting	00	01	0
Ittem for mending ye midle bell Claper leather ..	00	0	06
Itt to John Newton for quorter of 2 men y't com to sett up ye Kings Armes in ye Church ..	00	02	0
Finis ye 21th of Aprill 1663. The sume tottall ..	06	16	04

Churchwardens' Accounts for 1790.

Grasmere April the 6th being Easter Tuesday
Churchwardens chosen for the ensuing Year.

For Grasmere James Fleming for Knott houses
John Allison for Thompson's Underhelme
For Langdales John Benson for Milnbeck
Edward Tysons for Fieldside
For Rydal & Loughrigg—Edward Park for late Edward Benson's High Close
For Ambleside—Thomas Lycott.

General Charge.	£	s.	d.
To Ringing on Sundays & Holydays & to Grease & greasing the Bells		13	4
To dressing Church and Church Yard		2	6
To cleaning Church Windows and Sentences ..		1	0
To washing Church Linen 3s 6d, to cleaning Church plate 6d		4	0
To the Rushbearers 2s 6d, to drawing the accounts 3s		5	6
To writing Marriage Register 1s, to drawing copy of Register 2s 6d		3	6
To Dogwhipper 3s to Steeple Window mending 3½d Repairing Choir Door		4	5½
To Bell ropes mending 1s, to 4 Bushels of Lime & Carriage for Steeple Roof 7s 4d		8	4
	£2	2	7½

For Grasmere in particular.	£	s.	d.
Received by Assessments for Repairs of Church & Schoolhouse	4	3	4
Rec.d of the old Chuchwardens		6	11½
	£4	10	3½

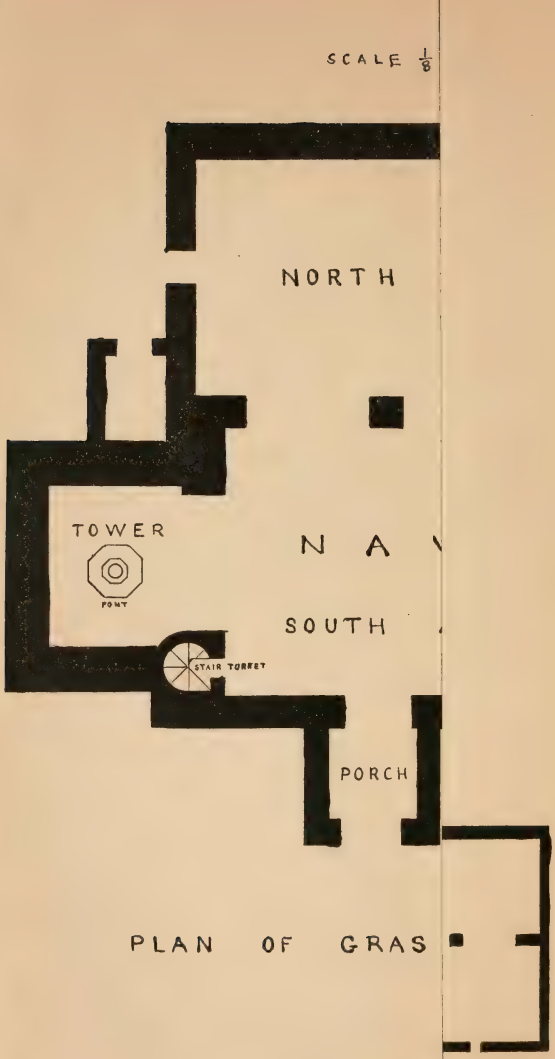
Disbursements.	£	s.	d.
To the old Churchwardens going out of their office & Journey		1	4
To the new churchwardens entering on their office & Journey		1	4
Paid to the Commissary for their part of one Presentment and Prayer Books		7	7¼
To Bread & Wine & Carriage at Whitsuntide ..		7	2
To Bread & Wine at Michaelmas		6	6
To Bread & Wine & Carr: at Christmas		7	2
To writing their part of one Presentment		1	0
To Charges at laying Church Rate 1s, to repairing school windows 1s 3d		2	3
To repairing Church windows in Grasmere Third ..		6	10
To Wine at Xtmas 1786 lost by Leakage of the Wood bottle & unsettled before		6	10⅝
Their Third part of General Charge ..		14	2½
	£3	2	3½
Remains..	1	8	0

For Loughrigge & beneath Moss.	£	s.	d.
Received by Assessment for Repairs of the Church	1	13	4½
Recd. of the old Churchwarden	1	13	4
Recd. for one burial in the Church		3	4
Recd. of Ambleside Churchwarden		5	0¼
	£3	15	0¾

Disbursements.

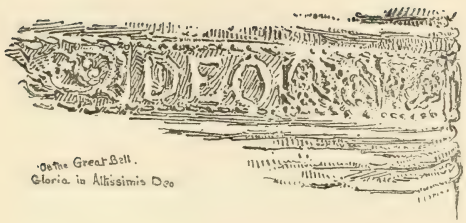
To the old Churchwarden going out of Office & Journey			8
To the new Churchwarden entering on his Office & Journey			8
Paid to the Commissary for his part of one Presentment & prayer Books	5	0	¾
To writing his part of one Presentment			6
To Bread & Wine at Whitsuntide	4	4	
To Bread & Wine & Carriage at Michaelmas ..	5	0	
To Bread & Wine at Christmas	4	4	
To Charges at laying Church Fees 1s, to repairing Church Windows 1s 6½d	2	6	½
To flagging a grave 2d To Wine lost by Leakage of w'd bottle at Xmas 1786 4s 7¼d	4	9	¼
His Third part of General Charge ..	14	2	½
	2	2	1
Remains ..	1	12	11¾

The account for Langdale does not appear.


SCALE 1/8
NORTH
TOWER
FONT
N A
SOUTH
STAIR TURRET
PORCH
PLAN OF GRAS

PART V

LATER PARSONS OF GRASMERE
AMBLESIDE CHAPEL
AMBLESIDE CURATES
LANGDALE CURATES
SCHOOLS AND CLERKS
CHURCH RATES
NON-RATEPAYERS
REGISTERS
PRESENTMENTS, BRIEFS, AND CHARITIES
THE RUSH-BEARING



LATER PARSONS OF GRASMERE

GRASMERE settled down then, after the Restoration, to an absentee rector, the Rev. John Ambrose; and under him was a curate-in-charge, the Rev. John Brathwaite. One of his name, son of William, "pleb.," matriculated from Queen's College, Oxford, in 1631, aged 18, whom Dr. Magrath thinks may have been he.* Under Mr. Thomas Brathwaite's will, 1674, "Mr. Brawthwaite minister of Grassemire" received a legacy of 20s., which shows that he enjoyed the esteem of that Puritanical gentleman. He often appears in the Account Book. For churching the squire's wife he received regularly 5s.; until there comes the melancholy item in 1675:—

	£	s.	d.
Apr. 17—Given to Mr. Jo. Brathwait for preaching of my Dear Wifes Funerall Sermon (upon Prov. 31, 29) and often visiting her dureing ye time of her sickness and praying by her	02	00	00

Other items are more cheerful; for often the minister's little daughter would carry offerings of fruit, cherries

* See "Flemings in Oxford."

and wild blackberries to the Hall, for which she would receive a *douceur* in return. Also, as boys apparently then caught woodcocks in springes, as they did later (see Wordsworth's Prelude), the item occurs in 1782 :—

	£	s.	d.
Dec. 12—Given Parson Brathwait's Son who brought some Wood-cockes	00	00	06

The daughter seemingly married in 1685, for the Squire's boys were dispatched on May 24th, with money to give at her offering—a collection made at the wedding for the benefit of the couple ; Will giving 5s. and Dan 2s. 6d.

It was in 1684 that Parson Ambrose, who for some forty years had been connected with the rectory of Grasmere, passed to his long rest. By surviving five brothers—several of whom were bachelors like himself—he succeeded to the family estate ; and the old Furness homestead had been added to his other residences.* The Rydal squire notes in that Account Book—which became practically a diary :—

	£	s.	d.
Aug. 20—My Cosin Ambrose, Lord of Lowick and Parson of Gresmere, dying Aug. 16. 84 was this day buried, and I attended his Corps from Lowick-hall unto Ulverston-Church, where he lyes interred, being ye last male of his family in ye North	00	00	00

Little as Grasmere had known him, the old man remembered the place in his will, and bequeathed £50 for the school, under trust to the " minister and such persons as shall be of the four and twenty of the parish of Grasmere."

The death of Ambrose left the post vacant for Henry

* West's *Antiquities of Furness.*

Fleming, the squire's second son, who had been bred up to the church, doubtless in readiness for it. He had taken his B.A. degree in 1682, from Queen's College, Oxford, and there he was still residing, in preparation for his M.A. degree, to be taken next year. Presented now by his father to Grasmere, he proceeded on November 22nd to Carlisle for his ordination, and next month rode to Chester to complete the business of his appointment. On January 7th he was formally inducted to the ancient fabric, over which he was now—a young man of 25—to rule; and his father on this occasion opened heart and purse to his neighbours at the Church-Stile Inn in an unwonted manner.

" . . . and spent Jan. 7 at Robert Harrisons in Gresmere when he was Inducted by Mr. Jo. Brathwait 3s. 6d."

The new rector then returned to Oxford, where he remained until the end of 1687. Clearly he was in no haste to settle down in Grasmere, at any rate before his income was free from burden* and until something was done to the rectory, which wanted effectual repair. His eldest brother assisted him in plans; and he wrote to his father on March 14th, 1687, " I have received a letter from my Brother William concerning Grasmere church and Parsonage House, with a model of the house

* The outlay connected with Henry's appointment was considerable. His expenses in Carlisle with his brother Daniel amounted to £2. 7s. 6d.; also after ordination " For ye Bread and Wine at ye Communion in Carlile-Cathedral " 2s. 6d., and 1s. given at the offertory. At Chester, besides expenses and fees, he paid the Bishop of Chester's secretary £5. 5s. Next, on February 13th, comes the item " Delivered my Son Henry to pay tomorrow at Kendal for his Tenths for Gresmer due at Xtmas last, ye sum of " £2. 17s. 0½d. Again on May 30th, " Paid at London unto Mr. James Bird for ye first payment of my Son Henry Fleming's First-Fruites for ye Parsonage of Gresmere, ye Sum of " £6. 8s. 7d. On November 18th, the same amount was paid as second instalment; the third on October 9th, 1687, £6. 11s. 1d.; and a final of £7. 1s. on July 31st, 1688. The total, £26. 19s. 3d., is a little over the amount paid by the Rector of Clayworth as first-fruits in 1672. Money was, however, now coming in, and Parson Brathwaite would seem to have furnished the new rector with a round sum of £20 at intervals, beginning in May, 1685; two such being paid in 1687. What the arrangement was in regard to the curate's stipend is not clear.

he designes to build, which I like very well, if the money will finish it, and adorn the church. But I am affraid that it will fall short unless you be pleased to be assisting in wood."

Probably the squire did assist; and it may be a stout oak from Bainriggs that bears still the incised legend "This House was built 1687 Henry Fleming Par"; which implies that the house was entirely remodelled.* The work went briskly forward, and on June 22nd the squire noted:—

	£	s.	d.
"Spent yesterday at Gresmere when I viewed ye Painting in ye Church, and ye Parsonage new House	00	05	00

which meant tips and treats at the alehouse, and a great commotion.

Harry was still in Oxford in October, but early in December he was down, and preached to his people.

Dec. 11—This day my Son Henry Fleming preached his first sermon—upon Romans xiii in Gresmere church, where I would have been, had I had notice of his preaching.

This statement shows Harry's nervousness in face of his clever father. It may have been with reluctance that he left the University where for nine and a half years he had lived a student's life; but that his departure was intended to be final is clear, from the fact that his box followed him, the cost of its carriage being 11s.—44 lb. at 3d. per lb.

Harry would seem to have been a quiet, unostentatious man. His tutor, the Rev. Thomas Dixon, wrote of him to his father on his first arrival from the country, "Yo^{r} Son is both frugall and studious, and all that I find

* The beam was dislodged when the new rectory was built in 1895, but upon the furnishing of the old tithe barn as a parish room in 1905, it was appropriately set up there.

amiss in him is that he wants courage and heart, I do all I can to animate and encourage him and to put some more spirit into him. I hope disputeing in ye Hall will put some briskness and metall into him, and teach him to wrangle: He is one of three that yo^{r} nephew Fletcher calls his Juniors in ye Hall, So that they must endeavour to bafle him and then heel cease to stand upon his Seniority or att least to triumph in it. He deserves also all the encouragem^{t}, that may be, because he is willing to do anything and frequents Prayers and Disputacons as much as any one, though of much less Quality and honour than himselfe. He has another fellow-Pupill of ye same order that keepes pace with him, and they have combin'd to sett patterns to all ye rest of their Table: I hope theyl continue this their emulacon, and that yo^{r} Son will also excite others of his degree to ye same excellency and p'fection."*

It is probable that Harry was never taught to "wrangle"; and though his abilities were excellent, he rose to no high office in the Church, like his brother George. He had a true interest in his parish, as we must suppose, from the encouragement he gave to the people over the embellishment of the church; and the accounts show that "ye Dr." went over into Langdale at least once (in 1696) to preach and administer the sacraments. He neglected the bells, as has been seen, and possibly the wardens had a difficulty in getting hold of him; for from 1694, when he acquired the living of Asby, Cumberland, he resided there. He married, in 1700, Mary, daughter of John Fletcher, of Hunslet, and on his death, in 1728, left a daughter only.

With Dr. Henry Fleming was associated, as curate, the Rev. Thomas Knott. This worthy man was doubtless of the Grasmere stock that for so many generations

* Ry. Hall MSS., His. MS. Com. 2084.

had supplied able and prominent members to the village community.* He entered his name in the Grasmere register as curate and schoolmaster in 1687. In 1694 he was promoted to the more independent (and doubtless better paid) curacy of Ambleside. The letter he wrote to his rector on the occasion of the Kelsick bequest, which does credit to them both, has already appeared in print.† The Rev. Thomas continued to officiate in Ambleside until his death in 1744.

The Squire of Rydal (who had been knighted in 1681) died in 1701, and it was the curate-in-charge, Dudley Walker, who preached his funeral sermon and received the honorarium of £1 1s. 6d.

The removal of this strong spirit must have made a difference in the parish. His heir, William, who purchased a baronetcy, was a man of feebler type, whose influence would be little felt in the parish. He ceased, apparently, to worship at the old church, for in 1728 he bought the two front pews in Ambleside Chapel, which had belonged to the Braithwaites. On the death of his brother Henry, he appears to have nominated for the rectory of Grasmere one William Kilner, who immediately retired in favour of another son of Sir Daniel, George, born 1667. He was totally unlike his brother Henry in temperament. Handsome in person, of good abilities, assured spirit and pleasant manners, his path in life proved an easy one. As a boy, he, of all the brothers, had found it possible to ask his father for money, whether to bet upon his cock at the Shrove-tide fight, or to enter his college library, or even to engage in a trading venture.‡ Once within the church, he advanced rapidly, for his father's old friend, Dr. Smith, Bishop of Carlisle, gave him the

* See *A Westmorland Township, Westmorland Gazette*, May 7th, 1910. He was not, however, as there stated, the son of Michael.

† See *Ambleside Town and Chapel*, p. 53.

‡ See *Ambleside Town and Chapel*. More particulars of the education of George Fleming will be found in the forthcoming Chronicles of Rydal.

living of Aspatria in 1695, and four years later made the young man his domestic chaplain. From that time he accumulated benefices and honours. Made Archdeacon of Carlisle in 1705, he became Dean in 1727, shortly before his brother's death gave him the opportunity of absorbing Grasmere. The wardens' presentment of 1729 states " Our expected Rector is not yet Instituted and Inducted, the Cure is duly Supplyed by a Curate ; we know not what Salary is allowed him." The church for the moment would seem to be poorly manned, for it adds " We have no Parish Clark or Sexton at present."

The august rector, who had other benefices, was probably little seen in his native parish ; and in 1733 he resigned it in favour of his only son, William, who also became Archdeacon after him. Next year George stepped up to the post of Bishop of Carlisle ; and in 1736, on his brother William's death, he succeeded to the Rydal estates and the baronetcy. His only misfortune was the death of his son in 1743. He himself died in 1747, and a nephew became possessed of Rydal Hall and of the patronage of the church.*

It is risky to judge from negative evidence : but there is nothing to show that George Fleming, bishop and baronet, did anything either as rector or patron to benefit the church where he had worshipped as a child, or the parish whence he and his son drew an income for fifteen years ; the sole mention of him in the church books being a statement that he held a confirmation there in place of the Bishop of Chester. The wardens and the Eighteen, with the curate, kept parochial matters going ; and the former, wearied no doubt of waiting for help from the rector, tackled the great bell outlay in 1730-2, as has been seen.

* See *Dictionary of National Biography*. The fact of his having acquired the rectorate of Grasmere seems, however, not to have been known to his biographers ; but the Registry of Chester shows it.

After he had become bishop, George Fleming erected in the choir the marble monument that commemorates (in grandiose Latin) his father and himself.

The Rev. George Briggs acted as curate-in-charge from 1722. Though he may not have enjoyed a university training, the facts of his life that have been found suggest that his ministrations were beneficial to the folk. Like the first "capellanus," of whom there is record, Adam de Ottelay, and many another simple curate, he had footing in the community as statesman, holding house and land. In 1725 he first appears as "Mr. Briggs" in the Rydal rental, paying a lord's rent of 8s. 4d. for Padmar, or Padmire (Pavement End), which had belonged to the Rydal manor apparently since the days of Squire John. In that year also the minister, described as "clerk," married Miss Jane Knott, of Rydal, daughter probably of Edward and sister of Michael, who, for so long, acted as influential agents to the Rydal lord.

Mrs. Jane Briggs remained long as widow in possession of the Padmire estate; and the name of the Rev. George Briggs—doubtless her son—appears as holder, after a gap, in 1806; in 1819 that of the Rev. William Pearson has taken its place.*

Meanwhile, the death of the Archdeacon had left the rectorate vacant, and an unfortunate nomination was made by the patron-bishop. The Rev. John Craik, B.A., was probably never resident—a fact quite usual: but to this was presently added the more painful one that he became incapable of managing his affairs, and his sister had to act for him. Only five years after his appointment,

* One would willingly connect this Grasmere land-holder with the astronomer of the same name who enjoys a place in the *National Dictionary of Biography*. This remarkable man was born of statesmen parents as near as Whitbeck, under Black Combe, in 1767, and was educated at the Hawkshead Grammar School. His biographer, Dr. Lonsdale, in the *Worthies of Cumberland*, says, "Between his leaving Hawkshead and his becoming a clergyman of the Church of England I have no facts to guide me: but it may be inferred that he went to Cambridge."

Sir William Fleming writes of the complaints of the parishioners, who with a church sadly in need of repair can do nothing, since the rector will not come over to see to it. Matters presently became so acute that a petition was framed, begging the Bishop of Chester to intervene, as Mr. Craik was out of his mind, and had not been near the church for three years.* Yet it was not till the man's death, in 1806, that this miserable situation came to an end.

The Rev. Gawen Mackereth was curate under Mr. Craik. To judge by his name, he was a native of the vales, and he apparently entered the church—like many more in this period—by the door of the village schoolhouse. He wrote his name in the register on October 23rd, 1735, as "Ludimagister et Clericus Grasmereiensis," copying the inscription of Thomas Knott, though with a fault in the spelling. Twenty years later he preached for the last time his two yearly sermons in Langdale. Sir William Fleming chose the next curate himself; and he may have intended the Rev. John Wilson to occupy the post of rector, should this fall vacant. But that day was far distant, and Wilson—who seems from his action with regard to the owner of Bainrigg to have been a man of strong temper—lived but a short time after his appointment.†

He was followed by Edward Rowlandson, of whom scarcely anything is known; but who—according to the register that records his burial in 1811—served the parish for fifty years. He could not have taught the school, as the burial of Thomas Davis, schoolmaster, is recorded in 1801.

Under him and Craik Grasmere must, indeed, have slumbered spiritually. How could it be otherwise? But by this time Craik was dead, after being rector for sixty-

* Rydal Hall MSS.
† *Rydal Chronicles.*

three years—surely a record term for a lunatic! In the same year, 1806, Sir Michael le Fleming, the patron who had never exercised his rights, died likewise. His widow, Lady Diana, nominated as rector the Rev. Thomas Jackson. With him the long record of absentee rectors was broken. He is said to have sprung from a family of dalesfolk. He united, like some early predecessors, his spiritual office with a temporal one, and acted as "clerk" or agent to his patron. With his assistance, the heiress and Lady of Rydal Hall freed her estate from debt, bought the ruinous homesteads of the village, and replaced them by pretty cottages. Jackson was successful also with his own affairs, and left a good deal of property at his death, including Harry Place in Langdale, Tail End in Grasmere, Brow Head in Loughrigg, and Waterhead on Windermere. He lived, it is said, at Harry Place, and on most days rode his pony (according to the report of old Langdale folk) over the fell to Grasmere or Rydal Hall.

It is well known that the rectory was let to the poet Wordsworth. The premises had been sadly neglected, the wardens having, in 1798, "presented" the "Rectory-House, Barn, and out-Houses" as being in "a ruinous state," but the new rector was too good a business man to leave them in that condition. Dorothy Wordsworth writes (May 11th, 1810) that Mr. Jackson is willing to make the Parsonage comfortable, and will contrive a good library out of part of the barn. Later (June, 1811), she says, "There is an oblong 4-cornered court before the door, surrounded by ugly white walls."*

This graphic touch is interesting and suggestive. The place had apparently an ancient character, with a strongly walled fore-court, capable of being closed and defended. Such a plan—which was always that of a

* *Letters of the Wordsworth Family.*

manor-house—might be necessary of old for rectories, where the tithe-barn, often stored with grain and hay, stood temptingly, and occasionally was the subject of dispute.* Now it is just possible that the rectory may occupy the site of the former offices of the demesne. No manorial lord was ever resident in this remote vale, as far as we know; but a resident bailiff and a forester there must at least have been, with a few underlings. These officers would be placed in a lodge, stoutly barricaded with wooden palisades—later converted into walls. To this nucleus would be added, besides byres and barns and smithy, a "knight's chamber," for the accommodation of the lord, if he visited the spot, or pushed so far in the chase; and nothing is more likely than that a priest's chamber or house (along with the tithe-barn) would find a place within this safe enclosure. In such a case, the decay and final abolition of the demesne would leave the rectory in sole occupation of the ground. Wordsworth gave up his tenancy, after the death of two children, in the belief that the spot was unhealthy. It must have been still more so in ancient times, while the marsh that almost surrounds it was still undrained.

On the re-construction of the rectory in 1895 the old elevation was preserved as much as possible, but the level of the ground floor was raised five feet.

Tradition also states that the Rev. Thomas Jackson served personally the chapel of Langdale, and certainly—if he lived in that valley—this would be more convenient for him than the parish church. The curates under him appear to have been men of ability and worth. William Johnson indeed secured a fame as educationalist that is recorded in the *National Dictionary*. A Cumberland man, born in 1784, he appears to have come to Grasmere as schoolmaster before the death of the old curate

* In the mediæval story of Reynard the Fox, the Priest's barn is well walled about. See Francis Bond's *Misericords*, p. 73.

Rowlandson. He began to officiate in 1810, shortly after he had entered St. John's College, Cambridge. His stay in Grasmere was short, for Dr. Andrew Bell, when visiting Wordsworth in 1811, was so struck by his management of the village school, that he offered him the post of Master of the school then being built by the National Society in London; and thither he repaired next year. He became organizer to the Society and school inspector and rector of a London church. After his retirement from more active work, he returned (about 1848) to Grasmere, where he bought a piece of land and built the house, since enlarged, called Huntingstile. He was a friend of Edward Quillinan, Wordsworth's son-in-law, and in 1853 edited his poems with a memoir. He lived till 1864.

Johnson's name occurs in the letters of the De Quincey family. The future Opium-eater had just settled at Dove Cottage, where he was visited by his mother and sisters. The elder lady was a friend of Mrs. Hannah More, and it is a little amusing to find that the aid of that prophetess of the Evangelical Revival was invoked for Grasmere, which was evidently considered, by the strangers who began to invade the district, to be in a benighted state. At one particular evening reception at Barley Wood, Mrs. More's home, an effort was made to engage her interest in what were called "the Christian politicks" of Grasmere; but little was gained beyond a vague promise of Tracts, until the opportune arrival of Mr. Venn from Clapham, who gave hopes of help (for a time at least) from the Sunday School Society in money and books. Mrs. De Quincey, in reporting the matter to her son, looks forward to the time when "experience recommends the Institution to more effectual patronage at home, where at present it is an experiment, and viewed with indifference, if not with suspicion, by people who must very feebly comprehend the value of religious

instruction."* The "good Pastor" was to be cheered, meanwhile, "under his difficult labour" by the magic of Mrs. More's name, and the promise of more substantial aid when the De Quincey ladies should arrive.

But aid was to be found at hand, which probably did not excite suspicion. To Lady Fleming religion became increasingly dear after home troubles left her a lonely woman. Her accounts show that in 1817 14s. 8d. was paid to "Mr. Noble Wilson, Schoolmaster"—possibly for books: and in 1821 a fee of ten guineas was paid him "for Teaching Sunday School." Mr. Wilson, who followed Robert Powley (inscribed as curate in 1814), must have been a favourite. He came over from his cure at Witherslack in 1831 to bury Mr. Samuel Barber, who had made "Gell's Cottage" (now Silverhow) his home.

Evil days had fallen once more on the Grasmere rectorate. The Rev. Thomas Jackson died in 1822. He left two sons, one of whom, educated for the law, succeeded him as agent at Rydal Hall. The other, William, was bred up to the church, and no doubt his father had hopes that he would succeed him as rector.† But the right of nomination had, unfortunately, passed into the hands of Sir Daniel Fleming. No protest to the bishop, as regards his choice, was of avail, and the nominee, Sir Richard le Fleming, took office.

The rector remained at the rectory after his inhibition in 1834, and curates, named Kingsley, Magrath, and Harris did duty successively for two years each. Then,

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* *De Quincey Memorials*, vol. ii., 90-91.

† The Ven. William Jackson, D.D., was born in 1792, and preferred to the benefices of Whitehaven, Penrith, Cliburn and Lowther (Rector 1828—1878) by the Earl of Lonsdale, who gave him Askham Hall to serve as the Rectory of Lowther. Bishop Percy appointed him Canon and Chancellor of Carlisle, and gave him an Archdeaconry, which he resigned on becoming Provost of Queen's College, Oxford (1862—1878). He married the daughter of Mr. Crump who built Allan Bank, and had four daughters; two died young, one married a Mr. John H. Crump, the other the present Provost of Queen's College, Oxford, the Rev. J. R. Magrath, D.D.—Ed.

in 1840, came the Rev. Edward Jefferies, who for so long ministered to the parish as curate and rector. He remained as curate when, in 1857, the opportunity came for Lady Fleming to appoint her distant kinsman, the Rev. Fletcher Fleming, of Rayrigg (already serving the chapel of Rydal), to the rectorate, but when he retired, in 1863, the Rev. Edward was fully installed in his office. Mr. Jefferies died in 1893.* The men who followed him are still (1912) living; the Revs. H. M. Fletcher, W. Jennings, J. H. Heywood, and M. F. Peterson.

The Chapels.

Brief mention of the later history of the chapelries under Grasmere may be made here.

Ambleside, when the crisis of the Reformation came, took matters strenuously in hand, as we have seen. The townsmen provided a regular stipend for a curate who could teach Latin and Greek to their sons, and also kept up the fabric of the chapel, in complete independence of the mother church. Moreover the right of burial and baptism at the chapel was secured in 1676, after some opposition from the patron.† Nothing, perhaps, was definitely fixed with regard to the nomination of the schoolmaster-curate, when the townsfolk undertook to furnish his salary in 1584. They may have hoped that it would be left to themselves; and certainly they, with Mr. Braithwaite at their head, appointed during the Commonwealth. But the strong Squire of Rydal soon made it plain, that as patron of the mother church, he meant to establish his claim to the patronage of the daughter chapel, which stood on the Grasmere side of Stock Beck.‡ It has remained in his family ever since.

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* He had resigned the living in 1878.

† See *Ambleside Town and Chapel*, p. 42.

‡ See *Ambleside Town and Chapel*, p. 46.

AMBLESIDE CHAPEL.

IT may be well to give a list of the Post-Reformation parsons of Ambleside (rectified according to present knowledge, as well as the evidence of a provision made for them in 1584. This evidence was found amongst Mr. George Browne's MSS. too late for insertion in *Ambleside Town and Chapel*, where the deed of 1597 is given in full. It is an extract from a contemporaneous document, written out in a memorandum book of Christopher Birkett, who owned part of the lands of the Forrest family in Ambleside ; and it records the fixed contributions of that family to the endowment.

" Forth of the Schedule conteining the sums of money granted by ye Ten^{ts} and Inhabitants of Amble' for the repaires of the Chapel and payeing the Ministers Stipend according to an Award whereto the schedule is Annexed. Dated 16th Octobr in the 26th yeare of Queen Elizibeth.

John Forrest xijd.
Wife of Rich: Forrest viijd.
Antony Forrest iiijd.
Edw: Forrest 4d.
Thomas Forrest 3s. 4d.

A Schedule of all the P'cels of ground named and set downe to be Occupyed by ye Rulers of Ambleside to the use and intents conteined in the Award annexed.

One P'cell of ground conteining one Rood lyeing at the height of Seethwait in the possession of John Forrest.
One P'cell lyeing at Kilnhow, one Rood in the pos'ion of the wife of Richard Forrest.
One close above the Grove in possession of Edward Forrest.
One close called Grove close in possession of Thom: Forrest."

AMBLESIDE CURATES.

THE names of two or three priests who may have served Ambleside before the Reformation have already been given. A new era was marked by the endowment of 1584, and the appointment of an excellent and learned man followed.

1585—JOHN BELL. He was the first curate to inscribe his name in the Bible belonging to the chapel, which, after long alienation, has been restored to the church.* Bell's latest inscription tells that he had then served (in 1629) for 44 years. He was buried in Grasmere, December 23rd, 1634. His fine action in constructing with his scholars a causeway across the miry bottom between Ambleside and Rydal was long held in remembrance. In his latter days he must have had an assistant under him, for the burial of Leonard Wilson, "Scolmaister at Amblesyd," is entered for February 12th, 1621.

1635—THOMAS MASON (spelt also Mayson and Masonn). It was he, doubtless, who witnessed (and wrote out) many Ambleside deeds, though not till 1840 does the word "clerk" follow.

1647—HENRY TURNER, undoubtedly a Presbyterian.

1669—JOHN PEARSON. This nominee of the Rydal squire met with some opposition in the town, headed by Mr. Braithwaite "upon a private Pique"—so the patron reported to the bishop. He was, however, ordained and inducted; though the subsequent refusal of some of the townsmen to pay their pledged contribution to the salary of the curate was no doubt due to discontent.†

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* *Ambleside "Curates" Bible, Transactions*, C. and W. An. S., N.S. vol vii.

† *Ambleside Town and Chapel, Transactions*, C. and W. An. S., N.S. vol. vi., p. 47, where particulars of some of the following curates and their assistants are given.

1681—— THWAITES. The Christian name of this pedagogue has not been recovered. The diocesan registry does not give him; but his name is entered in the Curates' Bible, and moreover four of the Rydal squire's sons were placed under his tuition in January, 1681. His stay was short, and a collection was made for him in the chapel on October 20th, 1685, to which the squire contributed 5s.

1682—RICHARD WRIGHT was instituted curate before Mr. Thwaites' departure.

1688—ROGER FLEMING. His name suggests his being a native. He united husbandry with his other occupations. His burial is entered on September 2nd, 1694, and on the 11th, his successor, who had served Grasmere, was licensed.

1694—THOMAS KNOTT. He wrote out John Kelsick's will, by which Ambleside has so largely benefited. As his name is the last in the Curates' Bible, we must suppose that he caused a new one to be bought.

1744—JONATHAN MYLES.

1753—ISAAC KNIPE.

1786—JOHN WILSON.

1791—JOHN KNIPE.

1798—— CRAKELT.

1811—JOHN DAWES.
THOMAS TROUGHTON.
SAMUEL IRTON FELL.

An extraordinary entry appears in the Grasmere register for February 15th, 1674, "ye buriall of John Osgood of Amblesid surverer* for ye duty of Christ borne at Ridin in barkeshire."

* May mean *server* or *sufferer*. But whether we are to take it that John Osgood served as a clergyman or suffered as a Quaker is not easy to decide.—ED.

LANGDALE CURATES

LANGDALE was, at the Reformation, in worse case than Ambleside, where the townsfolk were rich enough to put both chapel and school on a sound financial basis. The Little Langdale chapel ceased to be. The one in Great Langdale, bereft of its particular ministering priest, was threatened with a like fate. Probably it was never closed, however. An intelligent native would be found to act as clerk for a nominal wage, and occasionally the rector would visit it, and would administer the Easter communion to those who were too old or ill to cross the fell. Two clerks appear in the register before the Commonwealth, who may have acted as lay readers. During the Commonwealth the chapel would be wholly in the hands of the sect that happened to be dominant for the moment; and the fact that its pulpit was open to any religious speaker undoubtedly caused the followers of George Fox to be more numerous in Langdale than in any other quarter of the parish. It was a Quaker who resisted the Episcopal church service, when it was revived. (See p. 88.)

But order was again established at the Restoration. Weekly services were apparently conducted by a lay clerk, and the Grasmere curate in charge came over once a year to administer sacrament (at a charge of 2s. 6d. to the township), and twice or thrice to preach (1s.). From 1680, when Langdale secured the privilege of a separate communion, she ceased to contribute to the bread and wine consumed at the parish church celebrations.

The ritual of the chapel is disclosed in a Presentment of its wardens for 1732, preserved among the general accounts.

They have (they say) the Commandments set up within the chapel; a Communion table; linen cloth; patten; flagon and Chalice; Reading-desk and pulpit; a Surplice; books, etc.; with bell and bell-rope. "Our minister resides with us; he is not in Holy Orders: he reads Prayers and Homilies." He is allowed "the usual salary." Sacrament is administered every Easter. Baptisms and marriages are solemnized by the curate of Grasmere. No alms are received from the Communicants; and they have no alms-box.

The separate parochial accounts kept for Langdale continually give items for repair and upkeep of the fabric and its adjuncts. One of these was a "common stable," doubtless used for the accommodation of those who rode to worship. After consultations, the re-building of the chapel and school was decided on in 1751, and the work was slowly proceeded with, at the expense of the township, through the next three years. There may have been always a priest's lodging in the valley. In 1762 the "Parson's House" was repaired for 13s. 3½d.

The following is a list—incomplete in its earlier part—of clerks, readers, and curates who served the chapel after the Reformation:—

William Gollinge "of The Thrange in Langden, clerk" had a son baptized 1590.
Charles Middlefell "clerke of Landale" died 1643.

Richard Harrison, clerk; died 1670.	Daniel Green, d. 1829.
Richard Steele, d. 1780.	Owen Lloyd, d. 1841.
Thomas Jackson, d. 1821.	Stephen Birkett, d. 1860.
William Jackson, 1821.*	James Coward, vicar; 1885.
Thomas Sewell, 1822.	R. S. Hulbert, ret. 1900.

Owen Lloyd was the son of Charles Lloyd, who was

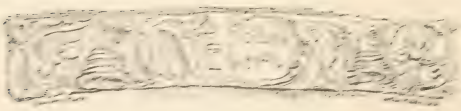
* See page 173, note.

the friend of Charles Lamb and for some time had resided at old Brathay. He inherited considerable poetic gifts, and composed the Rushbearing Hymn always sung at the Ambleside Festival. He lived for a while with his friend, Mrs Luff, at Fox Ghyll, Loughrigg.

Rydal.—The chapel of St. Mary, Rydal, was built by Lady Fleming in 1824 and consecrated by the Bishop of Chester on August 27th, 1825. This new foundation took a large slice out of the old parish, though customary dues and tithes continued for some time to be paid to the rector. (See later.)

Brathay.—The church, which was built here in 1836 by Mr. Giles Redmayne, stands on the Lancashire side of the river, but its parochial boundary took another slice off the old parish, which was now wholly robbed of the townships of Rydal and Loughrigg.

So the old mother church, robbed of her daughter chapels and the bulk she so long fostered, rules to-day only the little valley of Grasmere.



SCHOOL AND CLERKS

LATTER-DAY clerks and schoolmasters present a tangled subject difficult to unravel. Sometimes the clerk taught school. More often there was a separate schoolmaster who served as curate, entering holy orders for the purpose; for by this economy of labour two meagre stipends were put together, and the rector might even effect an economy on the one.* Sometimes each of the three offices was served by its own functionary, and yet again it seems likely that they were occasionally all filled by one man—in which case a deputy was hired for the menial work.

The school of Grasmere was doubtless an ancient institution, taught in days before the Reformation by the resident priest. It is not unlikely that it would be supervised by the visiting monk from York, for monasteries were then the centres of learning. It would, of course, be held within the church, or the porch, according to the season, as was the custom. After the Reformation, and during John Wilson's fifty-two years term as rector, followed by that of the erratic Royalist, Henry Wilson, tuition must have been a good deal neglected, or left to the clerk. One Michael Hird was serving as clerk in 1613, and a Robert of the name in 1638, who may have been a son, since the office was kept in a family whenever possible. Robert Hird, "clarke," was buried in 1680, which looks like ejection by the Presbyterians and subsequent restoration.

* There were sad feuds among the Puritans and churchy parsons in the eighteenth century, and the unpaid curates were often soldiered to them. See *Evelina*, Fanny and Captain Mirvan, etc., etc. and *passim*.

For we are left in no doubt as to the appointments made by the new religious authorities. George Bennison, proud, no doubt, of his office and of his smattering of Latin, wrote in the register, " I began to teache Schoole att Grassmire the 3 day of May 1641 being et Ludimagister et AEdituus."*

From his spelling of the place-name—which never had been anything but *Gresmer*—we suspect him to have been a stranger ; and it would probably be difficult to fill posts on the spot that had been summarily made void. Next comes " Thomas Wilson clarke at Gresmere in 1655." He it must have been who fought the battle of ritual with John Banks, bailiff, before a trembling congregation, after the minister Wallas had decamped. (See p. 87.) He, in turn, must have lost the post at the Restoration.

The Parliament passed a law in 1653 obliging every parish to supply a layman for the care of the registers, who was oddly called a " parish-register."† Accordingly this was done, and certified by the non-conformist magnate

* From a recent work, *Educational Charters and Documents*, by H. F. Leach, we learn that the clergy taught both themselves and others from the earliest times ; for instance, in the seventh century, Aldhelm, writing to the Bishop about his studies, tells him how after long struggles he grasped at last, in a moment, by God's grace, " the most difficult of all things, what they call fractions." In the tenth century a canon of King Edgar enjoins that " every priest in addition to lore to diligently learn a handicraft," and later in the same century the Council enacted that " priests shall keep schools in the villages and teach small boys without charge," and also that they ought always to have schools for teachers, " Ludi magistrorum scholas " in their houses, thus they would prepare others to take up the work professionally which they were doing for nothing. Five hundred years later we find it ordered at Bridgenorth, in 1503, that " no priste keep no scole, after that a scole mastur comyth to town, but that every child to resorte to the comyn scole." But the plague broke out and swept away " scole masturs " and pupils alike, and in 1529 the Convocation of Canterbury once more bade all rectors, vicars, and charity priests to employ some part of their time in teaching boys the alphabet, reading, singing, or grammar ; and appointed a Revision Committee of one archbishop, four bishops, four abbots, and four archdeacons to bring out a uniform Latin grammar for all schools. That grammar was taught in Latin in the tenth and eleventh centuries we know from the *Colloquy of Ælfric*, 1005, and from his preface to the first English-Latin grammar, in which teachers were told that " It is better to invoke God the Father giving him honour by lengthening the syllable (Păter) rather than cutting it short (Păter) as is the Britons' way, for God ought not to be subject to the rules of grammar." ED.

† Dr. Fox's *Parish Registers of England.*

of Ambleside Hall. "Bee it remembered that John Benson of Gresmere being elected and chosen Parish Register of Gresmere by the inhabitants ther was approved of and sworne before me the 9th of Aprill 1656.

Tho: Brathwaite."

John kept the office, as an entry in the accounts shows, at least twenty years.

Rector Ambrose, when he left £50 to the parson and "twenty-four" of the parish, in trust for the school, gave an impetus to education in the place. The sum—or part of it—may have been used for the erection of a school-house. At all events, the quaint little house still standing by the lych-gates was already there when Anthony Dawson, statesman—incited perhaps by the parson's example—bequeathed, in 1635, the sum of £7 to a "School Stock in Grasmeer."* He expressly entrusted it to the patron, rector, and incumbent, "towards the maintenance of a Schoolmaster teaching Scholars at the School-House built at the Church Yard Yeates in Gresmere."†

These legacies gave importance to the office of schoolmaster. The choice lay then, as now, with the rector and the lay representatives of the parish, at that time the Eighteen, now only six. The appointment of young Thomas Knott as schoolmaster, shortly after this accession of funds, was an excellent one. Curate as well, there is a question as to whether he did not occupy also the post of clerk. He was termed clerk in the wardens' accounts, when in 1694 he was paid 2s. for attending the Visitation and Correction Court. But a man who could appear at so dignified a function could hardly

* The dates of these legacies are incorrectly given on the list within the church.

† Rydal Hall MSS., Grasmere, was by no means behind the times in education. There was no parish school at Clayworth, Notts., in 1676, when an independent master was encouraged by permission to teach within the church; and an effort made to raise a school "stock" or endowment failed five years later. See *Rectors' Book of Clayworth.*

have swept out the church, or dug the graves—and these, according to the Declaration of the Wardens "We have no sexton belonging to our Church"—were among the clerk's duties. He may have paid a deputy to do these things, since there were perquisites belonging to the post worth gathering in.

Income of the Clerk.—The parish clerk was, in his way, as important a functionary as the parson. Like the rector, he had no fixed salary, but took from early times the offerings of the folk, which became fixed and proportionate, like the tithes. From every "smoke" or household fire, he had one penny a year. For church ceremonials, when he acted as Master of the Ceremonies, he received a fixed fee, 2d. for a wedding and 4d. for a funeral. He was the accredited news-agent or advertizer. For instance, when the Rydal and Loughrigg Overseers wished to put a pauper out to board, in 1796, they gave him 2d. "for advertising her to let." (See Tithes.) He was paid 2d. for every proclamation in church or yard.

These ancient fixed fees lessened in value through the centuries, as did the tithes. Various small emoluments however became attached to the post as time went on. If the clerk was a good penman—as he was certain to be when acting as pedagogue—he might be employed on the church writings. Besides the joint Presentments, charged at 2s. 6d. (of which Grasmere and Langdale paid 1s. each and Rydal with Loughrigg 6d.), there were the wardens' accounts to be drawn up, at a fee rising by degrees from 3s. to 5s.; as well as a fair copy to be made into the large register-book from the parson's pocket-register. This last duty—oft, alas! negligently performed—was long rewarded by 1s. annual payment, which afterwards rose to 3s. 6d. These items occur in the accounts:—

	£	s.	d.
1672—"For writting ye burialls Christenings and Mariages out ye Register Bookes 2 times"	00	2	00

1675—" Itt. for writting a coppy out of ye Regester Book etc .. .. £00 2 00"
1790—" To writing Marriage Register 1s. od. to drawing Copy of Register 2s. 6d."

The contract for bell-ringing was given to the clerk, and doubtless he secured a profit upon it. He had an annual payment for lighting the vestry fire; another (5s.) for " attending " the hearse. In 1822 the accounts give—after an item for " cleaning " the church-yard and windows :—

" To Ditto Sentences and Window and Church throughout self and Boy " 7s. 6d.

This was clearly not a school-master clerk, who enjoyed —instead of receipts from menial labour—the scholars' pence and the small stipend. If we turn back to enumerate the men who served the office, we find Robert Harrison (1695 to 1713) followed by Anthony Harrison.

There was no clerk in 1729, according to the presentment. Gawen Mackereth (1736 to 1756) is entered as " clarke and schoolmaster," though he certainly entered holy orders; so he may possibly, with a deputy, have combined the three offices. John Cautley was clerk in 1756.

After this came three generations of Mackereths: George of Knott Houses; the second George, who filled the office from 1785 to his death, at 81, in 1832; and David, his son. These men were clerks, pure and simple.* David pursued the calling of a gardener, working for Mr. Greenwood at the Wyke. In his time it was decided to give the clerk a salary. It began in 1845 at £4, and was advanced in 1854 to £5, with the stipulation, however, that one J. Airey should receive 13s. 6d. of it. But David did not prosper, and he emigrated to Australia

* The Mackereths made no pretention to learning, and Robert Pooley or Powley acted as school-master after the Revd. Noble Wilson in Sir Richard Fleming's time, and he was keeping the registers in 1814.

in 1856. He is remembered by Miss Greenwood as a tall, fine man, like his successor; he used, after giving out the psalm to the congregation at the desk, to march into the singing-pew (which stood where the organ is) and there lead the voices. Indeed, the parish clerk of old, besides a tuneful voice, was generally endowed with a fine presence. The family is spoken of in an old newspaper of nearly a year ago. Grasmere, December 31st, 1909: "Death of a noted Guide.—Last week there died at Grasmere one of the best known guides in the district, and one of the best known characters in his day—John Mackereth. He was descended from a very old family of Grasmere statesmen, intimately connected with Grasmere Church in three generations of parish clerks, and earlier still as 'Ludi magister et clericus.' The Rev. Gawin Mackereth held these offices from 1736 to 1756. George Mackereth, of Knott Houses, parish clerk, was buried July 23rd, 1785. His son George became parish clerk, and was buried 22nd October, 1832, aged 81 years. He was succeeded by his son, David Mackereth, who held the office up to the fifties. David's son, George, was much disappointed that he was not chosen clerk after his father's time. He was a tailor, and also a noted guide. He died in 1881, and Johnny as he was always called took his place as guide. He was also boatman in Mr. Brown's days at the Prince of Wales Hotel. In these capacities he was known to hundreds of visitors, who never came to Grasmere without looking him up. Of late years he worked on the roads for the council. He was great on wrestling, and for many years collected money for prizes at the rush-bearing. He had no children, but four brothers and three sisters, all of whom have left Grasmere, survive him." One Brian Mackereth was, in 1677, ranked among the Freeman Tanners of the City of Kendal. (*Boke of Recorde.*) In the same year Squire Daniel gave 5s. "at ye Collection of Brian Mackereth's

Houseburning." James Airey, the next clerk (1856 to 1862), must have been a clever, ingenious man, for he kept the clock in order from 1831. He was also appointed schoolmaster—an office that had often changed hands, and been united with the curacy—and Edward Wilson was taught by him (along with the younger De Quincey children) until he went with his brother to the Ambleside school.

The school, meanwhile, had received other benefactions. The church list records £80 given by William Waters, of Thorneyhow, in 1796, towards the master's salary; and good Mrs. Dorothy Knott followed this, in 1812, by £100, the interest of which was to be spent on the education of five Grasmere children, born of poor and industrious parents. John Watson, yeoman and smith, made a similar bequest in 1852, stipulating that the recipients should be chosen annually by the trustees of the school. In 1847 Mr. Vincent G. Dowley gave £10.

While the salary of the master was paid out of the school "stock" or endowment, the township took upon itself the maintenance of the school-house; and the expenses were duly entered in the accounts of the Grasmere "Third." The waller of those days was differently remunerated from the workman of these. For instance, the large statement of 1729 "For mending the Schoolhouse" is followed by the small sum of 14s. 6d. Naturally the windows wanted "glassing" from time to time. Occasionally new forms were procured—four in 1781 cost 5s. 4d.; or a new table, in 1805.

A loft or upper floor was constructed in the small house in 1782, the opportunity apparently being taken when the Grasmere township had bought an oak-tree for the renewal of their decayed benches in the church, and while workmen were on the spot. The expences stand as follows:—

	s.	d.
24 ft. of oak boards for school-loft at 3d. per ft. ..	6	0
8½ days carpenter laying school loft	14	0
1000 nails for the same	4	6
2 Jammers for door and some hair	1	0

The little house, so stoutly built and prudently kept up, remains the same, only that partitions have been erected for rooms, and the entrance has been changed from the church-yard to the outer side. The cupboard where the boys kept their books, the pump where they washed their hands, may still be seen. School was held within its walls till 1855, when the present schools were built.

With James Airey, who acted as both, the record of former schoolmasters and clerks may be closed. But one who, appointed in 1879, served the office of verger (substituted for clerk) up fo 1906, must be mentioned. Edward Wilson was son of the carpenter of the same name, and he pursued the craft himself. No custodian of old could have filled the office with greater reverence or dignity, nor graced it by a finer presence. Intelligent, calm, quietly humourous, he was also gifted with an accurate memory of the events of his youth; and his death, in 1910, at the age of 88 seems truly to have shut to finally the door of Grasmere's past.

THE CHURCH RATES

THE church rate, levied by the wardens and the Eighteen on the parishioners for the up-keep of the church, must for long have stood at a low figure. In Squire Daniel's Account-book for February $16\frac{88}{89}$ the item appears " Paid ye other day an Assess to ye church for my little tenem^{t} in Gressmer 00 00 02."

This was a small farm-hold at the Wray, which he had inherited from his uncle. And forty years later, when the year's expenditure was high, the freeholder, Francis Benson of the Fold, was rated no higher than 5s. 9d. for all his lands. The general charges after 1662, when the equipment for the episcopal services was complete, up to 1810, averaged in those years when there was no extraordinary outlay, barely more than £2, to which, of course, were added those incurred by each township individually. In 1733, when the bells caused a great outlay, it is possible that money was borrowed, for an item stands " For interest to Jane Benson 5s. 0d." Rydal and Loughrigg furnished, in 1661, the sum of £2. 9s. as its share in the maintenance of the church; and in 1682, £1. 5s. 6d.; while in 1733 it mounted to £13. 3s. 7d., of which the special Ambleside churchwarden produced, on behalf of his district, 19s. 1d.

When the churchwardens' books re-open in 1790, the general charges stand at £2. 2s. 7½d., and those of the three townships united at £7. 13s. 2½d.; our township paying of this £2. 2s. 1d. The following table shows the progress of expense :—

	Complete Charges of Three Townships.	Share paid by Loughrigg and beneath Moss.	Ambleside.
	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.
1790 ..	7 13 2½ ..	2 2 1 ..	—
1800 ..	5 4 11½ ..	1 15 6¼ ..	—
1810 ..	50 1 4½ ..	16 1 11½ ..	5 18 0½
1820 ..	21 5 5½ ..	7 1 0½ ..	2 2 7½
1830 ..	18 7 5 ..	4 11 5½ ..	1 8 4½
1840 ..	13 17 8 ..	4 6 11½ ..	1 14 0
1850 ..	20 16 9½ ..	6 6 2½ ..	2 4 9½
1857 ..	34 15 8½ ..	11 17 11½ ..	*4 2 11½

The extraordinary expense of 1810 was caused by the building of the vestry and hanging of the bells. In the year of the great outlay upon the roof (1814), when Rydal produced £35. 19s. 11d. and £14. 7s. 4d. from Ambleside, the wardens laid for the last time but one, the old church rate or "sess." Henceforth, the Overseers of the Poor took it over, and so long as it lasted paid it out of the Poor Rate. This seems to have been a period of laxity, when the old spirit of responsibility and watchful care in the custodians of the building, as representatives of their townships, became weakened. It was now, in 1816, when the wardens and Eighteen would seem to have less to do, that an annual dinner was instituted for them and the "minister." This cost 2s. a head; and though at the Easter Meeting of 1849 "it was resolved that in future the Landlord at the Red Lion Inn shall provide dinners for the 24 at the Rate of 1s. 6d. p^{r} Head, Ale also to be Included in the said Sum," the sum paid remained £2.

A fee of 1s. 4d. paid to the churchwardens on entry or exit from office (which covered his journey to Kendal) had long been customary. Besides this fee, his expenses began in 1826 to be paid separately at the rate of 3s.

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* Of such charges as were shared by all, two-fifths of one-third was Ambleside's share.

But the old order, long decrepit, was soon to be wiped out. Strangers were pressing into the remote valley, which Gray had found in 1769 without one single gentleman's residence. Not only poets and literary men began to settle in it, but rich men from cities, who bought up the old holdings of statesmen and built " mansions " upon them. These men demanded accommodation in the old parish church of a kind befitting their notions of dignity. Opposition seems to have been made to their demands. It is not quite easy to discover, from the account given in the churchwardens' book of the meetings held about the matter in 1856 and 1857, where the difficulty lay. We may surmise, however, that while the seats in the Grasmere division of the church were full to overflowing, those belonging to the other townships would be often vacant, since not only the old Chapels of Ambleside and Langdale were in use for regular worship and communion, but new ones were built for Rydal and Brathay. It is possible that an attempt to sweep away the traditional divisions and put Grasmere folk in Langdale or Loughrigg seats produced the dead-lock we read of. At all events, a vestry meeting was held on July 24th, 1856, with the Rev. Sir Richard Fleming in the chair, " to consider the propriety of making such an arrangement with respect to the free and open sittings in the church as may conduce to the general convenience of the inhabitants ; and preparatory to an allotment by the churchwardens of such free and open Sittings among the parishioners in proportion to their several requirements, due regard being had to all customary Sittings and to the rights of persons, having property in pews." This proposal was made by Mr. Tremenhere and seconded by Captain Philipps, both new-comers, though the latter (who had opened the Hydropathic Establishment at the Wray) seems to have been chosen as one of the Eighteen ; and it was promptly negatived by a majority of nineteen

to four. Mr. Thomas H. Marshall, another new resident, at whose instigation the matter had been begun, persisted in it however; and the two wardens for Grasmere agreed to take lawyer's counsel as to their action in carrying out a Faculty already procured, and for which they paid Dr. Twiss £3. 6s. This counsel is not very clear, but paragraph ii. of its text is of interest: "I think that the appropriation of any number of pews in a Mass to the separate townships, so as to exclude permanently the Inhabitants of the parish in general from the use of them, would be a proceeding in contradiction to the express provisions of the Faculty. The Faculty must be taken to have superseded any antecedent custom under which pews in a mass were appropriated to separate townships. I think it is the duty of the Churchwardens to assign to such parishioners as shall apply from time to time, indiscriminately as regards the townships, pews or seats, as the case may be, among the free and open sittings." Again, after expressing his opinion that the burden of the church rate should fall on the inhabitants in general, he speaks of "the custom for the townships to repair their own portions of the Church applied to the Church in the state in which it was, and under the exceptional arrangements of the Sittings which existed prior to the issuing of the Faculty. . . . The manner of collecting the rate by the officers of the townships may still hold good, but the rule of assessment must, I think, be derived from the general law."

The Archdeacon was likewise applied to by Mr. Marshall and Mr. Stephen Heelis, a lawyer from Manchester, who had bought a holding at Above Beck, and had built himself a house there. He was an able man, and at once took a prominent part in the proceedings. He was made churchwarden for Grasmere, and with his colleague, William Wilson, set to work in 1857 upon the unrestricted allotment of seats countenanced by the authorities.

This was the end of the individual shares held by the townships in the fabric of the old mother church; it was the end of the Eighteen who had represented the township; it was an end, likewise, of the general church rate for which those Eighteen stood responsible; since it was manifestly unfair to tax those whose rights had been taken away. Langdale fell away, and the Brathay part of Loughrigg, and Ambleside-above-Stock. The rate of 1½d. in the £ on property, which the wardens proceeded to levy on the whole of the parishioners, was responded to for the last time in 1858, when Ambleside paid £7, Rydal and Loughrigg £10 17s. 10d., and Langdale £8 6s. 3d., to Grasmere's £13 14s. 11¾d. The little division of Rydal with part of Loughrigg was indeed, by dint of its being dubbed a chapelry, held yet a little longer in the grasp of the old church; four statesmen and one warden were allowed her in return for the rate she continued to pay. This she seems at first to have paid equally with Grasmere, and in 1859 she contributed the high figure of £15 os. 10½d. towards the expenses of the church. In 1861 she paid £13 5s. 1½d. By 1866, however, the rate to supply the immensely increased expenses of worship had become a burden, even to Grasmere folk. A voluntary rate took its place, and Rydal contributed its unspecified portion to this for the last time in 1870. The offertory that then superseded all rates, paid only by worshippers, was an immediate success.

In 1879, when the volume of accounts closes, the year's expenditure stands at £155 14s. 1d.

NON-RATEPAYERS

THE religious factions—whether Baptist, Anabaptist, Independent or Presbyterian—that had sprung up during the Commonwealth left behind them no vital seeds of dissent in the wide parish of Grasmere, although the two last had in turn held the rectorate and the pulpit. As soon, indeed, as the Episcopal Church was restored, along with the Monarchy, the people returned with apparently a willing mind, and almost unanimously, to the old order of worship.

There was an exception, however, to be found in the Quakers, who were firm in refusing to re-enter the Church. George Fox, wandering on foot like an old Celtic missionary, had made his appearance in these parts in 1653, and at once his preaching (which mirrored his mystic and simple mind), united with a magnetic personality, had secured him a following. His teaching discountenanced all creeds, forms, and ritual. His meetings were, therefore, held in private houses; and so much abhorred by his followers was the "steeple-house" with its consecrated ground, as well as any fixed form of service (even the Office for the Burial of the Dead), that they often laid their dead in silence in their own garden-ground, rather than carry them to the church.

As the little band grew larger, a plot of ground was, however, secured as early as 1658 at Colthouse, near Hawkshead, in Lancashire, as a graveyard*; and in that neighbourhood, where they built a meeting-house in 1688,† they became numerous and active; and on

* Hawkshead Parish Register.

† From Mr. William Satterthwaite, of Colthouse, a member of the Society of Friends.

the Westmorland side of the Brathay—in Langdale and in Loughrigg more especially—George Fox also found adherents. In particular, Francis Benson, freeholder of the Fold, of a wealthy family of clothiers, and an influential man who served as Presbyterian elder in 1646, became his follower; and remained so through the persecutions. He received Fox into his house, even when the preacher had become a marked man. Fox's *Journal*, after recording his Keswick preachings in 1663, runs on :—

> We went that night to one Francis Benson's in Westmorland; near Justice Fleming's House. This Justice Fleming was at that time in a great Rage against Friends, and me in particular; insomuch that in the open Sessions at Kendal just before, he had bid Five Pounds to any Man, that should take me; that Francis Benson told me. And it seems as I went to this Friend's House, I met one Man coming from the Sessions, that had this Five Pounds offered him to take me, and he knew me; for as I passed by him, he said to his Companion, That is George Fox: Yet he had not power to touch me: for the Lord's power preserved me over all.

The fanatical spirit of Fox is shown perhaps in this passage, where he ascribes the inaction of these two parishioners of Grasmere, not to a generous tolerance of mind (certainly God-given), but to a direct interposition of Providence in his own favour. He likewise attributes the death of the Squire's good and gentle wife later on to God's wrath and judgment upon the husband for his persecution of the Friends.

In truth, Squire Daniel was not the man to view leniently the opposition offered by the new sect to the restoration of the old form of worship. It must be allowed that the method of their preachers was not only irritating but provocative; for it was their wont, when the congregation was assembled in the "steeple-house" to rise and denounce both worship and officiating clergy as instruments of Belial; with an occasional result of

rough handling and ejection by the people. We have seen that William Wilson, a Langdale man and one of their speakers, resorted to this method of interruption when the Church of England service was restored in the chapel. The parson of Windermere later on wrote to Squire Daniel begging his magisterial help, as a woman was in the habit of rising during worship and denouncing him. Wilson's misdemeanour was immediately dealt with at the Quarter Sessions, and on his refusing to swear the oath—a matter of principle with the Quakers, which was not rightly understood, and which made their offence a political one—was thrown into gaol, where, if his fine of a hundred marks was not paid in six weeks, he was to remain for six months, and to be brought again before the magistrates.*

This was certainly a severe judgment. How the case ended is not apparent, nor how long Wilson remained in prison. A letter exists at Rydal Hall, addressed to "Justice fleeming" and signed L.M., reproaching him for his treatment of the Quakers, especially of the four now in prison. One of these is "Wm. Willson, thy poore neighbour," of whose wife and children the Squire is admonished to have a care, since the prisoner had little but what he got by his hands—a statement which implies that Wilson was a craftsman.

The Rydal Squire had at first believed that he could force the Friends back to the common worship in the old parish church by means of fines, for he had the frugal man's belief that the pocket can be made to act upon the conscience. With the passing of the Act of Uniformity (1662) and the later Conventicle and Five Mile Acts, however, he and his fellow magistrates had a powerful legal hold over them. It is clear that he caused the known Quakers of the parish to be watched. One, James Russell, brought him word that there had been

* Indictment Book, Kendal Quarter Sessions.

a meeting on November 1st, 1663, at the house of John Benson, of Stang End. This was on the Lancashire side of Little Langdale beck, but the Westmorland folk who attended were Francis Benson, his son Bernard, "Regnhold" Holme, Michael Wilson, and Barbara Benson. Of Lancashire folk there were only Giles Walker, wright, who had walked from Hawkshead, and William Wilson and his wife. Wilson was the speaker, so his imprisonment had not damped his ardour. Again, next year, the constable of Grasmere, Thomas Braithwaite, and a churchwarden, Robert Grigge, gave evidence that certain Quakers had been seen returning from Giles Walker's house near Hawkshead; and among them were William Harrison, of Langdale, and Edward Hird, of Grasmere.

These doings were not passed over by the Squire. He even tried conclusions with the most powerful of the sect, Francis Benson, of the Fold, and accordingly the latter was summoned, in 1663, along with his wife Dorothy, to appear at the Quarter Sessions to answer the charge of having been present at a meeting. The penalty of non-appearance was a fine of thirty shillings, while the fines of John Dixon and William Harrison, both of Langdale, charged with the same offence, were respectively twenty shillings and ten shillings. Francis Benson probably cleared his legal mis-demeanours by money payments, for no evidence has been found of his imprisonment. He and his family, however, remained staunch Friends. The place of his sepulchre is not known, though his death is recorded for February, 1673, of "Fould in Loughrig," in the Quaker Registers. There is a tradition of a burying-ground at the Fold, somewhere about his now vanished homestead, and it is quite possible that some members of the family might be buried there, as the early Friends not infrequently made a grave-plot on their own ground. The Fold was so much a centre

of the sect that a marriage took place there between William Satterthwaite, of Colthouse, and the daughter of Giles Walker, of Walker Ground, Hawkshead, on December 11th, 1661.* According to another tradition, a Baptist Meeting-house stood at the Fold, and an old man, named Atkinson, whose forbears had owned the adjacent farmhold of the Crag—where he was then living—pointed out the exact spot on a little triangle by the road where the building had stood, and the " Dipping " took place. But this story is against all record, for we can trace the Bensons' adherence to the Friends to a late period.

A large number of Quakers travelled to Rydal in 1681 to make their Test or Declaration before Squire Daniel and his son, but the only folk of the parish among them were Bernard Benson, of Loughrigg, and Jane his wife, and " Regnald " Holme, of Clappersgate, and his wife Jane.

In 1684 a Rydal man " presented " before the justices quite a concourse of people who had been present at a " Conventicle " in Langdale. Some seventeen Loughrigg and Langdale names were cited: Edward Benson of High Close (his only appearance as a Dissenter), John Dixon of Rosset in Langdale, William and James Harryson of Harry Place, " Regnald " and Jane Holme of Loughrigg, James Holme, the Willsons of Langdale, etc.

Reginald Holme's name frequently appears in the Indictment Book of the Quarter Sessions, and generally in connection with secular disputes. He was, in fact, a turbulent character, little fitted to belong to the peace-loving sect, which he joined possibly from sheer love of dissent. Some items of his history have been given elsewhere. He owned the mill at Skelwith Bridge—probably then, as later, a corn-mill, though it is extremely likely that a walk-mill would be set up additionally on

* Papers of the Satterthwaite family.

this fine flow of water. About this water and other matters he was in constant dispute with his neighbours. One altercation, with a certain Thomas Rawlingson, the Friends tried to settle for him but as he refused to accept their verdict, a resolution was passed at a Monthly Meeting, held at Swathmoor (1676), that the law might now take its course. On another occasion Reginald was brought up before the Magistrates for assault; but the recurring bone of contention was a dam or weir which he had built across the river for the good of his mill—and to the damage, it was declared, of the pathway above, and of his neighbours' grounds. The Rydal Squire twice headed a party for the forcible destruction of this dam, as has been told*; but long afterwards Holme was in fierce conflict with Michael Satterthwaite, of Langdale, yeoman, about this or another dam.† Finally, in 1684, a crisis occurred, and Reginald's goods were seized by the strong arm of the law—a most unwonted proceeding; on which occasion his sons and his daughter fell upon the unfortunate officers, and beat them and put them forth with violence—which made another indictable offence.

After the law-suit concerning the tithes, which followed upon the Restoration (see ante), in which law-suit Francis Benson was concerned, and possibly other Quakers, we have no evidence as to whether the sect continued to oppose the payment of church scot. But there is abundant evidence to show that they were resolute in non-attendance at church, and in refusal to pay the church rate or "sess" levied on the townships for the upkeep of the fabric and its walls by the representative men of the parish. The Subsidy Rolls of 1675 show that Francis Benson paid for himself and his wife Dorothy the tax of 1s. 4d., which the Government demanded

* *Transactions*, Cumb. and West. Ant. So., vol. 6, N.S.
† Indictment Book.

from all non-communicants, as did "Reynald" Holme for self and wife, and John Benson of Langdale.

From wardens' accounts and presentments we gain many particulars of the dissenters of the parish, who appear to diminish in number as time goes on. It had become necessary by 1694 to account, in the books, for the deficit caused by the Friends' non-payment; and though in the following year two of them yielded, Bernard Benson paying up the large arrears of 15s. 11d. for "Church: Sess," and Jacob Holme 7s. 6d., the "Allowance for Dissenters" appears each year on the debit side.

Presentments are only available from 1702. The following extracts give the names of the non-payers of the two townships. Those of Langdale would appear in their separate presentment:—

	£	s.	d.
Loughrigg.			
1705—Francis Benson of the Fold	0	1	8
The same for property in Grasmere	0	0	10
Jacob Holm of Tarn Foot	0	1	1
The same for property in Grasmere	0	0	2
Jane Holm of Skelwith Bridge	0	0	4½
John Shacklock of the How	0	1	4
Grasmere.			
Francis Benson of Grasmere, Underhow ..	0	0	2
Jane Benson, widow	0	0	3
Miles Elleray of Clappersgate	0	0	2
Arthur Benson	0	0	2
Loughrigg.			
1706—Francis Benson of the Fold	0	1	1
For Grasmere	0	0	10
Jacob Holm	0	1	4
For Grasmere	0	0	2
Jane Holm	0	0	8
For Mill Brow	0	0	4
Miles Elleray	0	0	1
Grasmere.			
Jane Benson	0	0	3
Francis Benson, Underhow	0	0	2

Loughrigg.

1707—Francis Benson of the Fold	£0	2	9
For Grasmere	0	1	2
Jacob Holm	0	1	10
For Grasmere	0	0	1
Henry Dover	0	0	11
John Rigg..	0	0	10½

Grasmere.

Jane Benson, widow	0	0	4
Francis Benson, Underhow	0	0	2
The wardens add "Likewise we present two churchmen [name crossed out] and George Mackereth of Clappersgate	0	0	9
1712—Presented "for denying to pay their church-sess":—			
Jane Benson of Nichols in Grasmere.. ..	0	0	5
Francis Benson of ye Fold in Loughrigg ..	0	0	3
The same for Loughrigge and Rydal.. ..	0	1	8
Henry Dover for Loughrigg	0	1	2
"We present Wm. Ulock Church sess" ..	0	0	4
"We have in o[r]. parish about two hundred Familys in all. No papists. No protestant Dissenters, Except 6 or 7 families of Quakers."			
1717—Only Francis Benson of the Fold is presented for refusing to contribute to the Rates ..	0	1	8
And for his Estate in Grasmere	0	1	4
1723—The wardens declare that none refuse to pay the parson's dues, or clerk's fees, or church-rates, but the Quakers. "We do not know that they have qualified themselves according to ye act of Toleration. We do not know that the place of their meeting has been duly certified. We do not know that their preacher, or teacher, hath qualified himself by taking the oaths etc., as the Law requires."			
1727—"None refuse to pay Church rate, but Francis Benson a Quaker for not paying his Church sess, viz.	00	01	03"

1729—Francis Benson is again presented for refusing to pay his Church sess	£0	1	5
1732—His unpaid share is set down at	0	5	9
And Bernard Benson's	0	3	0

This Francis Benson, the third Friend of his name at the Fold, is the last we know of. As the old families died out or dispersed, no new adherents of the sect appear to have arisen in the parish, and dissent ceased.

The only comment on non-conformity found in the registers occurs in the second volume (1687-1713). It runs :—

A perticular Register of some pretended Marryages of the people called Quakers within the parish of Grasmere As followeth—

But only two weddings from Great Langdale are set down. Also is entered :—

Jane daughter of John Grigge of Stile End in Great Langdale was baptized by A prebyterian minister the tenth day of Aprill Ano Dom 1710.

The " minister " so clearly obnoxious to the registrar may have been a visitor to the valley.

When a stranger entered the church in 1827 and asked the clerk if there were any Dissenters in the neighbourhood, he was told that there were none nearer than Keswick, where were some who called themselves Presbyterians ; and of these the clerk professed so little knowledge that he hazarded the suggestion that they were a kind of " papishes." The clerk aforesaid was old George Mackereth,* forgetful alike of the Colthouse Meeting-House and the small Baptist Chapel at Hawkshead Hill, built in 1678? For about the first clustered a few families who clung to the faith of their fathers ; though the latter (of which little seems to be known) may have dropped out of use.

* Hone's *Table Book*.

Dissent had never existed in Ambleside. The men of that town, who managed the affairs of their chapel, had no real leanings towards it, and the Restoration found them all churchmen again. The only man of the town-division who could be taxed as a non-communicant in 1675 was Roger Borwick, and he was a disreputable inn-keeper at Miller Bridge, a Roman Catholic who had once been a personal servant of the ill-fated heir of Squire John Fleming.

THE REGISTERS

THE early registers are contained in three parchment books. The first measures 15 inches by 7, and has a thickness of 1 inch. It was re-bound recently in white vellum, and an expert has endeavoured to restore the almost vanished characters of the first page. The earliest legible entries are for January 1570-71. The sheets may have once got loose and some lost, for there is a complete gap between the years 1591-98, and another between 1604-11. There are minor gaps besides, which, perhaps, may be explained by the system of register keeping that obtained in these parts. A smaller book for entries was kept, called a pocket-register, in which the minister (or the clerk) noted down the ceremonies as they occurred; and these were copied from time to time into the larger book. It was a system that, in the hands of careless officials, produced nothing short of disaster, as far as parochial history is considered. The re-entry, long over-due, had often not been made, before the pocket-register was mis-placed or lost. In times of stress, like those of the plague-years, the church officials seem to have become paralized, and ceased to cope for months at a time with the registration of the dead. For instance, in the deadly year 1577, February, April, May and July are blank; eight burials are then entered for August, and none for the rest of the year. Again, next year, eight deaths are recorded for July, nine for September, and twelve for November, while the intervening and succeeding months are blank. This state of things continues through the years of oft-returning plague that followed, and through the long rectorate

of John Wilson, diversified by the occasional loss of a page or a mysterious skip, *e.g.*, in marriages there is a gap between the years 1583-4 and 1611—more than 27 years.*

The first register-book is, therefore, a disappointing document, from which no satisfactory conclusions as to population or death-rate can be drawn, nor adequate information concerning families or individuals. The Hawkshead register-book is a complete contrast to this one, in neatness and fulness; and the scribe has marked with a cross all deaths from plague. Maybe the grammar-school there, with its master, affected favourably the records of the parish. In Grasmere the school was, after the Reformation, left in general to the parish clerk. This first book shows signs, like the Curate's Bible of Ambleside, of having been accessible to the scholars—no doubt while these were yet taught in the church; for experiments in penmanship and signatures occur on blank spaces, which were seized upon with avidity by the learner—parchment and paper being hard to come by.

The condition of the third register-book is wholly satisfactory. It is in its original binding, but the clasps have gone. It measures 16½ inches by 7, with a thickness of 3 inches. Its title runs, "Grasmere's Register Book, from May the 7th, A.D., 1713. Henry Fleming, D.D., Rector; Mr. Dudley Walker, Curate; Anthony Harrison, Parish: Clerk." The book closes in December, 1812. As in the earlier volumes, the baptisms and marriages are written on the left page, and burials on the right. The first entry is a receipt from the man who furnished the book:—

* The following list of omissions in the earliest Grasmere Church Register, 1570-1687, has been kindly supplied by Miss H. J. H. Sumner.—ED. "No Marriages between ffeb. 1583-4 and June 1611; no Burials between July 1588 and May 1598; no Christenings between Dec. 1591 and ffeb. 1600-1; no Burials between May 1604 and Apr. 1611; no Christenings between March 1603-4 and Apr. 1611; no Christenings between ffeb. 1625-8 and June 1627; no Marriages between July 1625 and May 1627; no Burials between ffeb. 1625-6 and May 1627."

June ye 21, 1713. lb. s. d.

Recd. of ye Reverend Dr. Fleming one Pound and Eleven Shillings for ye Parchmt. wherwth. this Book is made for ye clasps eightpence and for ye Binding Six Shillings. I say Recd. by me Bry: Mackreth 1 17 8

Some entries of confirmations were made in this volume. The first has caused considerable surprise, and it is of interest on three scores. It shows that the solemnization of the rite had been long neglected—the Bishop of Chester no doubt finding this remote parish of his diocese very inconvenient to reach, and relegating it on this occasion to his brother of Carlisle, who but recently was its rector. It likewise proves that the population was larger then than in the next century, and that the estimate of the number of communicants given on a preceding page was under, rather than over, stated. It illustrates the fact, besides, that the old forms would accommodate at least twice the number of the present benches.

October the 23, 1737.

A Confirmation was then holden at this Church by the Right Reverend Father in God Sr. George Fleming Baronet Lord Bishop of Carlisle at the instance of the Lord Bishop of Chester at which time and place About five Hundred Persons were Confirmed. [The next confirmation recorded is in 1862.]

An entry on the first page, in fine hand-writing, is likewise of interest, as showing that long after the Reformation, and even after the Prayer Book revision of 1662, the prohibition of the old Sarum Manual against marriages taking place during the three great feasts of Christmas, Easter and Penticost still had weight, though it could not be enforced, and that the rector—a stout churchman—desired its observance.

Marriages Prohibited from Advent Sunday till a Week after the

Epiphany, from Septuagesima Sunday till a Week after Easter, from Ascension day till trinity Sunday ; Secundum Dr. Comber.*

Curious entries, or any bearing upon local history, such as are frequent in some registers, are scarce in the Grasmere books. The law that commanded the use of woollen for shrouds, by way of propping up a declining industry, caused the usual amount of trouble here in the way of affidavits and entries.

Another enactment, that all sickly persons who presented themselves for cure by the Royal touch—a remedy much resorted to under the Stuarts—were to come armed with a parochial certificate,† has left its trace here.

Wee the Rector and Churchwardens of the Parish of Grasmere in the County of Westmorland do hereby certify that David Harrison of the said Parish aged about fourteen years is afflicted as wee are credibly informed with the disease comonly called the Kings Evill ; and (to the best of o^r^ knowledge) hath not hereto fore been touched by His Majesty for ye s^d^. In testimony whereof wee have here unto set o^r^ hands and seals the Fourth day of Feb: Ano Dom 1684.

HENRY FLEMING Rector.
JOHN BENSON
JOHN MALLISON Churchwardens.
Registered by JOHN BRATHWAITE Curate.

This poor youth was probably of the Rydal stock of Harrisons, where several generations of Davids had flourished as statesmen, carriers and inn-keepers.‡ The journey to London would be little to them.

The introduction of gunpowder into the slate quarries could not have long pre-dated the following entry :—

" Thomas Harrison of Weshdale [Wastdale ?], wounded with the splinters of stone and wood the 29th of August

* The reference is to the Dean of Durham's *Companion to the Temple*, the standard work of the period on the Prayer-Book ; but the passage goes no further than to say that " some among us " still observe the " former " prohibition.

† Dr. Cox's Parish Registers.

‡ See " A Westmoreland Township " in the *Westmorland Gazette*.

last by the force of gunpowder was buryed September the 2nd. Ano Dom 1681."

An instance of longevity is given in 1674, when widow Elizabeth Walker, of Underhelme, " dyed at ye age of 107 years old."

But the entry that has caused the most comment is one that commemorates a boating disaster on Windermere Lake. Forty-seven persons were drowned, with some seven horses : " in one boate comeinge over from Hawkshead " on October 20th, 1635. Singularly enough, this is the only known record of an event with which tradition and later story has been busy. These affirm that the boat-load consisted of a wedding-party ; also that the corpses were buried under a yew-tree in Windermere church-yard. If the catastrophe happened to the customery ferry, known as Great Boat, plying between Hawkshead Road and Ferry Nab, the interment would naturally be made at that church, though an unfortunate gap in the registers for the period prevents certainty on the point. But why was the event written down at Grasmere ? It appears to have been inscribed by George Bennison, clerk and schoolmaster, who did not enter office till 1641. Had he the intention (unfortunately unfulfilled) of recording local history in the register-book ? Could we suppose the Ambleside Fair for October 20th—an occasion of great resort only a few decades later—to have been in vogue before its charter was gained, the conjecture that the drowned folk had been attending the fair might be entertained.* There were other passage-boats on the lake besides the Great one. In connection with the number drowned, it may be mentioned that ferry-boats were formerly of great size. Miss Celia Fiennes, who, about the year 1697, had occasion on her journey to cross the Mersey with her horses from

* Mr. G. Brown has been helpful in this matter, which is very fully discussed in Mr. H. S. Cowper's *Hawkshead*. See also *Ambleside Town and Chapel*.

Cheshire to Liverpool—a passage which occupied 1½ hours—did it in a boat which, she says, would have held 100 people.*

Miss Helen Sumner has been, since 1906, engaged in a transcript of the first register-book. It is now complete, and it will be put into use instead of the old illegible volume, of which it is an absolutely accurate copy, done in fine modern script.

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* *Memorials of Old Lancashire*, vol. i., p. 60.

Miss Armitt was under the impression when writing of the Registers that the Second Register was missing, so consequently made no extracts from it. —Ed.

PRESENTMENTS, BRIEFS, AND CHARITIES

THE Presentment for 1702 may be given fully as a specimen of the document which the wardens were bound to furnish at the Visitation of the Bishop or his emissary. A few extracts may be added, for the simplicity and shrewdness of some of the answers make them entertaining, as in the entire repudiation of an apparitor and his dues.

During Dr. Fleming's rectorate, a difference arose between the officials who controlled the finance department of the Visitation and the vestries of the parishes of Windermere and Grasmere.* It was proposed by the latter to make one Presentment serve for the whole parish, mother-church and chapels together; and the rector of Grasmere stated that it was only through a mis-conception that separate Presentments had been made. This was a sound, economical plan for the parish, but it was firmly opposed (as was natural) by the higher officials, who affirmed that separate Presentments were the rule. The table of "ancient and justifiable fees" was given as follows :—

	£	s.	d.
For appearance and presentment of every warden, four old and four new	0	8	0
Book of Articles	0	1	0
Examination Fee and registration of every presentment	0	0	8
Citation Fees and exhibiting the transcript	0	1	0
Due to the King for Citation	0	0	6
Apparitor's Fee	0	0	8

* Browne MSS.

Also apparitors received at the Visitation a fee for carrying out books sent by the King and Council—as Thanksgiving Books, etc.; and for each of these he might claim a fee of 1s., which raised the sum total to be paid at a Visitation occasionally to 14s. or 15s. No wonder our wardens disclaimed all knowledge of the apparitor! For their consolation they were reminded that in other Jurisdictions the wardens were called to Visitations twice a year, which doubled the fees and expenses.

In 1691 the parish paid "To the Chancellor at the Bishop's Visitation for a Presentment" 5s. 10d. The writing of it cost 4s. 2d. A Book of Articles was bought also. Five years later a Presentment for the whole parish cost 13s. 2d.

(Presentment for 1702.)

The presentmt of John Mackereth, George Benson and Edward Tyson, Churchwardens, for the Church of Grasmere, wthin the Arch-Deaconry of Richmond in the Diocese of Chester, at the Ordinary Visition of John Cartwright, D.D., Comissary and Officiall, of the said Arch-Deaconry on Friday the fifteenth day of May Ano Dom 1702, in the parish church of Kirby Kendall, as followeth :—

Articles Tit. I.

1, Our Church is in good repair, and no part of it
2, 3, 4, demolishd, nor anything belonging to it Imbezelled or sold.
5, We have a Font wth a Cover, a decent Comunion Table, wth one decent Covering and another of Linnen, wth a
6, 7, Chalice and a cover, and two flagons for the Comunio, &c., wth all the other things the Articles of this title
8, 9, inquire of, and they are ordered and used as they ought to be, according to our Judgmts, so yt we have nothing
10. to present in answr to the Articles of this first Title.

Articles Tit. II.

1, 2, 3, Our minister, the Revrend Dr. Henry Fleming, is qualified accordg to Law, Legally Inducted, hath read
4, the 39 Articles wthin the time Appointed by law, and declared his Assent thereto, we believe and know nothing

5, 6, 7, to the contrary. He has another Ecclesiasticall Benefice. He preaches, we believe, every Lords Day, unless sick-
8, ness or reasonable absence hinder him. Mr. Dudley Walker his Curate supplys the cure in his Absence.
9, Both our Parson and his Curate do all things inquired of by the Articles of this Title, and are not guilty of
10. any of the faults therein mentioned, as we are perswaided. So we have not any thing to present in Answer to the Articles of this Title.

Articles Tit. III.

1, 2, We know not of any Adulteries, Fornicators or Incestuous, Com'on Drunkards or Swearers, or other
3, Sinn'rs and Transgressors inquired of in the Articles of
4, 5, this Title, wthin our Parish. We believe each person
6, behaves himself as he ought, during the time of Divine
7, 8, Service, nor have we observed anything to the contrary.
9, Onely in Answer the the (*sic*) 4th Article of this Title
10. we present the persons whose names follow for refuseing to pay their duty for Easter Offerings, and for refuseing to contribute to the Rates for Repairing of our Church, and things thereto belonging, viz., *Francis Benson* of the Fold, and *Dorothee* his wife, *Jacob Holm* and *Sarah* his wife of Tarnfoot, *John Holm* and *Jane Holm* his mother of Skelwath Bridge-End. All Quakers and come not to Church or Chapell to divine service. *Francis Benson*, of Under How, and *Jane Benson*, widow in Grasmere, Quakers, and come not to church to divine service.

Articles Tit. IIII.

1. We have a Parish Clark belonging to our Church aged 21 years at least, of honest life, able to perform his duty,
2. chosen by our Parson, and dos his duty diligently in his office of Parish Clark, as we are perswaided.

Articles. Tit. V.

1, We have no hospitall, alms-houses, nor freschool. But we have a School and a Schoolmaster, licons'd by the Ordinary, who teaches his schollers in the Church Catechism, and doth ye other things inquired of in the
2, Articles of this Title, as in duty he ought. The Revenue of the School is Ordered as the Founder appointed, and as ye Laws of ye Land allow, to the best of our knowledges.

3. We have none that practiseth physick, Chyrurjery, or midwifery in our parish w'thout License from the Ordinary, that we are privy to, or know of.

Articles Tit. 6.

1, 2, 3. Our church-wardens are chosen duly, and have done their duty, as we think they ought to have done, in all things here Inquired of.

Articles Tit. VIII. (*sic*).

1, 2, 3, 4. We do not know wt faults the Officers of our Ecclesisticall Courts are guilty of, and wh are Inquired of by these Articles of this Title. We have heard that they take greater fees then of Right they ought to do, and if they do so, we wish they may reform such Injuryous practices: But because we are privy to no thing of this kind done by any Ecclesticall Officer, we dar not upon Oath present it, and here ends our Presentmt.

GEORGE BENSON
JOHN MACKERETH } Churchwardens.
EDWARD TYSON

The later presentments, up to 1732, are—except where quoted from elsewhere—largely repetitions of this. One or two answers to queries, however, are naive. In 1712 "we have no physitia's, nor Sargions in or parish."

Concerning officers of Ecclesistiall Courts, we know not their Officers; nor wh their Officers are; nor now they perform them, well, or ill; nor wh their just Fees are, and can therefore give no account of ym.

In 1717 "Concerning Apparitors. We know not how Apparitors do their office, nor can we present them, or any of tm, for any undue Fees exacted by them, and we think we ought not to pr'sent any man for faults wch we know not by him."

Between 1702 and 1732 only one woman is "presented" for "fornication"; and only occasionally, in a later set of Presentments, between 1768 and 1796 is the fault—which the registers show to have been not infrequent—mentioned.

BRIEFS.

Printed briefs, that called upon the churches to succour the unfortunate by offerings in money, reached Grasmere, remote as it was. Such of these sheets, as were found

to be sufficiently intact, were quite recently gathered together and bound as a volume. Within the register-book the amount realised by some of these collections is set down. At Christmas, 1668, the offering made for the poor of London after the fire, reached the high figure of £17 6s. 3d., which shows how that great calamity affected the popular mind. Among other recipients of the parochial bounty are found : " Captives at allgeeres " (Algiers), 3s. 1d., also " A breife beyond ye seaes and for ye suply of printing The bible for one John de Krins..y," 7s. 3d. Very frequently individuals or towns that had suffered loss from fire or other causes were relieved. Perhaps there was grumbling then, as now, at the many collections, and 8d. only was realised for the relief of Hartlepool. The Squire, who generally gave one shilling for a brief, was doubtless absent that day.

Charities.

The care of the poor was of old a parochial matter. The regular supply of money for this purpose came from the offertories at the great feasts of the church, and was distributed (at least after the Reformation, if not before) by the wardens. There were other and casual sources, such as the doles given at the funeral of a person of gentle birth. The scale of the dole differed according to the rank of the individual. In the seventeenth century four pence (the old silver penny) was the usual sum, though at the funeral of William Fleming, of Coniston (claimant to Rydal Manor), only 2d. was given. Squire John Fleming was buried quietly, on the evening of his death, like many another recusant. There was no time, therefore, for that extraordinary and seemingly magnetic gathering of the poor, that sometimes occurred, even on a day's notice—for such news sped like a telegraphic message.

But some indigent folk collected next morning, when

£1 10s. was distributed. This, at 4d. a piece, would represent 90 persons. The concourse was far greater when Squire Daniel's wife was interred, when it numbered over 1,800 persons; the amount given reaching £30 10s. 4d., while the dole-givers spent at the inn 3s. 6d. The gathering at his little son's funeral, two years later (1677), was naturally smaller. The entry in the account-book is as follows :—

June 1—Given to ye Poor (at 2d. apeice) at ye Funerall (this day) of my son Tho. Fleming at Gresmere-church (where he was buried near unto my Fathers Grave on ye north side thereof close to ye wall, and who dyed yesterday, being Thursday, about 8 of ye clock in ye morning at Rydal Hall) ye sum of 04 03 08

It[em] paid to ye Minster for attending ye Corps all ye way 5s., to ye Clark for ye same, and makeing of ye Grave 2s., to ye Ringers 2s. 4d., in all 00 09 04

The first bequest on record to the poor of Grasmere is that of old Mrs. Agnes Fleming, the shrewd mistress of Rydal Hall. Her will, dated 1630, directs that three-score and ten pounds shall be devoted to the poor of Staveley and "Gressmire," the interest to be distributed every Good Friday. In this distribution George Dawson "beinge blinde" was to receive during his life-time a noble, which was 6s. 8d. or half a mark. Accordingly, after her death, the bailiff entered in his accounts £1 13s. as "paid the poor folke at Easter 1632 for my old mis"; the blind lad's noble was also set down. This charity seems, however, to have been lost during the "Troubles" that presently overtook family and country. An effort to re-institute the one at Staveley at least was made by Squire Daniel.

March 25, 1659—Spent with my Cosen Philipson at Staveley when I went to Mr. Feilde to looke yt ye Poor of Staveley bee not wronged in ye distribution of ye £40 interest, left ym by my great Grandmother Mrs. Agnes Fleming .. 00 00 06

Mention of an extraordinary gift appears in the same account-book. The young Earl of Thanet had lately, as Lord Lieutenant of Westmorland, entered the county in great state, and with a lavish expenditure of money. His generosity (which may have had a political bias) extended even to this remote quarter of the Barony. In those days £10 was a large sum ; and the coin (as a precise entry under February, 1685, informs us) was conveyed to Kendal by a servant, delivered to the mayor, who passed it on to the Rydal Squire. One half was for Windermere, the other for Grasmere ; and one wonders how large was the gathering at the church for the dole.

Mar. 1, 8⅓—Distributed this day at ye Parish Church in Gresmere to ye Poor Householders yt go to Church in ye said Parish ; being ye gift of Tho. Earl of Thanet, ye sum of 05 00 00

Other charitable gifts to the poor are written on boards hanging in the church, viz. :—

Edward Partridge and others of Grasmere £50, the interest to be distributed on St. Thomas's Day to such poor as do not receive parochial relief. (Undated.)

William and Eleanor Waters, in 1807, £200, the interest to be distributed under the like restrictions on Lady Day.

THE RUSHBEARING

IT is impossible, in an account of Grasmere, to pass over the Rushbearing, a Church Festival that has come down from ancient times, and which, after a period of languishment, has revived once more into a popular pageant.

It may be the remnant of some fair or wake held on St. Oswald's Eve and Day, and organized by the early church to supersede some Pagan Feast of the late summer. The close of July, or the early part of August, was a good time for merry-making in these parts; for then the husbandman's chief harvests were gathered in—the wool from the sheep, and the hay from the meadows; while the little patches of oats were hardly ready for the sickle. We hear of a great pageant and play devised by Thomas Hoggart* being performed in the open air at Troutbeck village (1693) on "St. James his Day," which was the 25th of July, equal to the 5th of August, new style.

The Rushbearing at Grasmere was held in recent times on the Saturday nearest to July 20th; and a stranger, T. Q. M., found a celebration taking place in 1827 on July 21st.† In fact, the Day of the church's dedicatory Saint, August 5th (which is equal to August 16th, new style) seems not to have been associated recently in the minds of the people with the Festival; though it was associated at St. Oswald, Warton, where the ceremony survived till the close of the eighteenth century. It is possible that the shift from old to new style, in 1752,

* *Remnants of Rhyme*, by Thomas Hoggart, Kendal, 1853.
† Hone's *Table Book*.

weakened the connection between Saint's Day and Festival in the minds of the folk, leaving them content to await the summons of the clerk, who reminded them, it is said, when it was time to cut the rushes. The old chapels of the parish likewise had their Rushbearing. That of Langdale appears in the wardens' accounts for that township, where 2s. 6d. was generally put down for expenses attending it. The item disappears, however, after 1752, for then the chapel was rebuilt, and was no doubt paved throughout with the fine slate of the valley: the need for rushes there being over, more than 80 years earlier than was the case with the mother church. The Ambleside Festival has continued to the present day (though with a lapse of a few years, according to Grasmere folk), and is regularly held near the day of her Saint (Anne), July 26th, the hymn used being the same as at Grasmere.

As a matter of fact, the Rushbearing had of old a real meaning, for the sweet rushes were strewn over the floors of churches and halls alike, both for warmth and cleanliness.* The covering was particularly necessary in churches where the soil beneath the worshippers' feet was full of corpses. The great annual strewing (though we would fain believe that it was done oftener than once a year) was naturally performed when rushes were full grown. It was a boon service given to the church by the folk during a spell of leisure. Such service they were well accustomed to. The statesman not only by custom immemorial, gave to his lord a day's labour at harvest time, but he and his wife cheerfully turned into their neighbour's field for the like. Sheep-clipping has survived as a boon service; and what a man in old days gave to his fellow, he did not grudge to his church.

Food and drink alone were the boon-workers' meed of old; and the first entry that concerns the Rushbearing

* Queen Elizabeth's Palace at Greenwich had its Presence Chamber, in 1598, "richly hung with tapestry and strewn with rushes."

in the wardens' accounts shows that the drink at least was looked for.

1680—"For Ale bestowed on those who brought Rushes and repaired the Church .. ..00 01 00"

It appears from this entry that the boon service was not limited to rush-bearing in old times; but that general repair was done by willing craftsmen. The item for ale continues "on Rush-bearers and others"; in 1684 it rises to 2s., and to 5s. 6d. next year. The amount was perhaps considered excessive by the more temperate of the parishioners—a runlet could be had for 3s.—and from 1690 the charge "To Rushbearers" became a fixed one of 2s. 6d. At this figure it stood for 150 years, though from 1774 the township of Grasmere added on its own account a further 1s. for "Getting of rushes for the church."

The parochial charge "To Rushes for Church," 2s. 6d. appears for the last time in 1841. With the paving of the floor, which took place in 1840, the need for the fragrant covering was over, and matting was laid down —probably only in the aisles—in 1844, at an expense of 11s. 4d.

Up to then rush-strewing had been necessary. Burials in the earthen floor had continued up to 1823; and the forms, from the gradual sinking of the ground, had to be constantly lifted and re-set. Only in 1828 the townships had gone to considerable expense in re-seating and re-flagging their portions of the interior, and in the same year a stray visitor to Grasmere expressed himself as shocked at the primitive condition of the church. "I found the very seat floors all unpaved, unboarded, and the bare ground only strewed with rushes."* In the previous year T. Q. M. had found the villagers

* Morrison Scatcherd, quoted in the Rushbearing pamphlet compiled by Miss E. Grace Fletcher.

seriously working at their annual task of strewing. It seems to have been done informally, under the superintendence of the clerk; and later in the day—nine o'clock it is said—came the spectacle and the merry-making. A procession was formed, when the wild flowers—which the children had been busily engaged during the day in gathering and weaving into garlands—were carried to the church and laid there. An adjournment was then made to a hay-loft, where dancing was kept up till midnight, and where no doubt more than the parochial ale was drunk. Old James Dawson, the fiddler, boasted to the stranger that he had for forty-six years performed on the occasion. He complained of the outlandish tunes introduced by the "Union Band chaps," who had apparently superceded him in the honour of leading the procession. But James may be said to lead the music in spirit yet, for a certain march, used for an unknown period and handed down by his son Jimmy (who succeeded him as village fiddler), is still played.

Clarke was present at the Festival at an earlier date,* and he gives a rather different account of it. His description, however, is of something he had seen in the past; and one is inclined to doubt that the Rushbearing was ever held at the end of September. According to him, the rushes were actually borne in the procession, which was headed by girls carrying nosegays, the chief of whom (called the Queen) had a large garland. When the work of strewing was done, and the flowers laid in the church, the concourse was met at the church door by the fiddler, who played them to the ale-house, there to spend an evening of jollity.

An account of the ceremony at Warton, earlier still,† gives an interesting variation of custom. Here the floral

* *Survey of the Lakes*, 1789.

† MS. account, given in Whitaker's *Richmondshire*.

decorations were not separate from the rushes, but covered the bundles as crowns. The smartest of them, trimmed with fine ribbon and flowers, were carried in front by girls. The crowns were detached in the church, and after the strewing of the rushes were left as ornaments. Artificial trimmings were in use in Grasmere in 1828, for the stranger's eye had been "particularly attracted by the paper garlands which I found deposited in the vestry; they were curiously and tastefully cut, and I was almost tempted to buy one of them." The sketch by Allom of the Ambleside Festival in 1833 shows how elaborate and artificial the bearings had become.* But taste and meaning could not have been altogether banished for certain sacred emblems and devices were cherished; and Moses in the Bulrushes, and the Serpent in the Wilderness—the latter wholly composed of rushes—which are still carried as "bearings" at Grasmere, are said to have been handed down from a forgotten past. The same is claimed for the Ambleside Harp, the strings of which are contrived from the pith of the rush—the "sieve" of the olden days of rush-lights.

It has been seen that the joint payment by the townships for the boon service ceased when the actual rush-strewing ceased. But the Festival continued, though it was clearly changing its character and becoming the children's Feast of Flowers. This is shown by Grasmere's special contribution to the occasion. The annual gift, after rising a little, is entered in 1819 as 3s. 9d., "To Rushbearers' Gingerbread paid Geo: Walker." From that time Grasmere's expenditure for "Rushbearers bread" is a constant though varying item. In 1839 it dropped as low as 1s. 6d., which, supposing two-pennyworth to be the amount given to each child, would represent but nine bearers. From this low figure however it

* *Westmorland and Cumberland, etc., Illustrated*, 1833.

rose; and the languishing Festival was revived, if not saved, by the munificence of Mr. Thomas Dawson, of Allan Bank, who began about this time to present each bearer with 6d.* The gingerbread item was often 6s.; in 1847 it was 9s. 10d.; in 1851 it is set down as "To Rushbearers 62," 10s. 4d. In 1856 13s. 6d. was paid to A. Walker for "Rushbearers Cake," and in the next two years the climax was reached by the sums £1. 1s. 5d. and £1. 1s. The long-continued item then abruptly ceases—seventeen years after the provision made for ale by the whole parish ceased—swept away no doubt by the revolution in church-management and church-rates, and for thirteen years there is a gap. When, however, the ancient but now resisted church-rate was dropped in 1871, and all expenses were defrayed from the large and gladly-paid offertory, the church again provided for the Festival. The expenses were now put down under "Rushbearing," as Bells 6s., Wilson 8s., Cakes 19s.; amounting to £1 13s., towards which the collection at the church service (for the first time established) furnished 16s. 8d. Next year there was a marked increase: Band £2, Joiners 8s., Ringers 6s., Gingerbread £1. 5s. 10d., and Baldry 4s. 1d.; total £4. 3s. 11d.; collection, £2. 18s. 1d. The payment to joiners must have been for making the frames of the bearings, which have assumed many varied forms.

* The wardens' accounts, given below, practically agree with the story as told in the *Rushbearing* pamphlet, p. 24, where the Festival of 1885 is described, but apparently the date 1834 should be 1839. "Before leaving the church-yard, the children, to the number of about 115, were each given a sixpenny piece, in accordance with the custom that has prevailed for over the last fifty years. The origin of this gift of sixpence will perhaps be of interest to many. In 1834 there were only seven rushbearers, and it seemed that this revered custom was on the decline. Mr. Dawson, of London, and owner of Allan Bank, was present, and he gave each of the rushbearers sixpence, which gift he has continued yearly ever since. The next year the numbers of bearers was increased to fifty, and year by year this figure has been added to. It is said that Mr. Dawson does not intend to continue his gift any longer, so that it appears the year 1885 will be the last one in which the children will receive their brand new sixpence, unless someone takes the matter in hand, or Mr. Dawson reconsiders his decision."

The Festival has, since 1885, taken place on the Saturday next to St. Oswald's Day. The procession, from which everything gaudy and irreverent has been eliminated, now makes a beautiful spectacle. Children of all ages take part in it, even tiny toddlers, supported by parent or grandmother. The floral burdens are deposited in the church and the service held, when all disperse; and on the next Monday the children have their feast with games and prizes, paid for by the united contribution of the parishioners.

The Walker family, who for so long provided the gingerbread, are remembered to have had a little shop—the only one in the place—and it stood near the present one of Messrs. Gibson.* Presumably, Dinah, the wife, baked the cake; and George, in the manner of the time, pursued the additional trade of tailor. Mrs. Mary Dixon, of Town End, was the gingerbread maker for many years, but has recently given it up.

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* A supply of Kendal wigs (a special cake still made in Hawkshead) came to the shop once a week, as Miss Greenwood remembers.

"Grasmere Churchwardens' Account General Charge, 1834: to Rushes, 2/6. Grasmere in Part: to Gingerbread for Rushbearers, 5/-. General Charge, 1835: to Rushes, 2/6. Grasmere in Part: to Gingerbread for Rushbearers, 4/6. 1836, General Charge: to Rushes, 2/6. Grasmere in Part: to Gingerbread for Rushbearers, 3/6. 1837, General Charge, Grasmere in Part: to Gingerbread for Rushbearers, 3/-. 1838, General Charge, Grasmere in Part: to Ginger Bread for Rushbearers, 3/9. 1839, General Charge: to Two Years getting Rushes at 2/6, 5/-. Grasmere in Part: to Ginger Bread for Rushbearers, 1/6."

APPENDIX.

The continuity of village life is illustrated by the following list of house names in Grasmere existing in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries; all with asterisks are still there.—Ed.

List of Names of Houses in Grasmere mentioned in earliest Church Register.

1571	*	The Wray.
1574	*	Brimahead.
1576		The beck.
,,	*	Underhelm.
,,		Bankhousehow.
1577	*	Turnhow.
1579		Beckhousehow.
,,	*	Blintarngill.
1586	*	Sick syd—(Syke side).
1600		Beckhouses.
1601	*	Scorcrag.
1604		The heirig.
1611	*	fforrest syd.
1612	*	Howhead—(How top).
1613	*	banriges—(Bainrigg).
1614	*	The wick, (or) wike—(Wyke).
,,		Wallend.
1619	*	Grenhead.
1629	*	Winterseeds.
1630	*	The mosse.
1630	*	Broadraine.
1638	*	Church steele—(stile).
1638		Knott place.
1640	*	Gilfoote.
1642	*	Gillside.
1644	*	Hollings.
,,	*	Pademan—(Pavement End).
1646		below sike.
1651		beneath sike.
1655	*	Underhow.
,,	*	Knothouses.
1656	*	Thornehowe.
1669	*	Tailend—(Dale end).
1672	*	Mosse side.
1682		Mitchel place.
,,		Nicols.
,,	*	Benplace.
1683	*	Underhowcragge.
1684		Underlangcragge.

Districts Mentioned.

1604	Townhead.
1611	Townend.
1640	Eiesdall.

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